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PREVIEW: ANATOMY OF A GROUP

by



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Preview": Anatomy of a Group, submitted by Christopher Xerxes Ringrose in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to provide a critical literary history (that is, both evaluation and documentation) of the magazine Preview, and the group which formed around it in the forties. In discussing the work of Patrick Anderson, P.K. Page, F.R. Scott, Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw, it attempts to evaluate the influence of the group atmosphere on their writing, and the extent to which the group succeeded in producing a coherent body of "social verse". To this end, I have tried throughout to relate the poetry of individual authors to the intentions and production of the group as a whole, and to see Preview as the result of this group's collaboration.

Chapter I introduces the group and its magazine, and states the direction which the thesis is to take; it also explains Preview's relation to modern Canadian poetry of the thirties, through an examination of the career of F.R. Scott. Chapter II illustrates the ethos of the group, and its effect on the magazine; and suggests the extent of the influence of Auden and Spender on the group's poetry. It also examines the small amount of criticism which has been devoted to Preview.

Chapter III is a survey of the group's Preview manifestoes and criticism, which present its main ideas about the nature of poetry, and the role of poetry in wartime. This provides a background for Chapter IV, which is a detailed critical study of the Preview poetry of the five members of the group.

Chapter V documents the breaking-up of the Preview Group in 1945, and the amalgamation of the magazine with First Statement to form Northern

Review. It also presents brief analyses of the post-Preview development of Anderson, Page and Scott in the light of their work during the war. Finally, the "Conclusion" of Chapter V sums up the thesis's argument for a revaluation of Preview in more favourable terms than have hitherto been afforded it by the critics, and suggests that the two most interesting aspects of Preview are its attempt to write a kind of poetry which is both politically and aesthetically interesting, and the insight it gives into the forces working within and through a closely-knit literary group.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I INTRODUCTION	1
II ATTITUDES, INFLUENCES AND REPUTATION: THE <u>PREVIEW</u> ETHOS AND THE <u>PREVIEW</u> CRITICS	10
III THE " <u>PREVIEW</u> MANIFESTO"	30
IV THE <u>PREVIEW</u> POETS	48
i Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw	52
ii Patrick Anderson	67
iii P. K. Page and F. R. Scott	86
V DISPERSAL	106
VI CONCLUSION.....	124
FOOTNOTES.....	128
APPENDIX	135
BIBLIOGRAPHY	146

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This study is a critical literary history of Preview, the Montreal little magazine which ran from March 1942 to January 1945 in a total of twenty-three issues, and which was during that time the centre of some of the most intriguing and productive activity in Canadian literary history. Preview was produced by a group of five writers who came to be known as the Preview Group: Patrick Anderson, F.R. Scott, P.K. Page, Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw. This group of five would meet frequently during the war to discuss the policy behind their magazine, and to consider one another's poetry, and many of Preview's qualities stem from the fact that it was a group production by a number of young writers who were interested in the possibility of writing poetry which would deal with the subject-matter of the war, and of politics and society in general, from their own left-wing perspective.

The members of the Preview Group came together in 1941 and 1942. Patrick Anderson was an Englishman who had in 1939 married Peggy Doernbach and travelled from New York, where he had been studying on a Commonwealth Scholarship, to Montreal. At the start of World War II he was twenty-four years old, a graduate of Oxford University, and a completely unknown and virtually unpublished author; by 1946 he was generally acknowledged to be one of the most promising and influential young poets in Canada. This fame came about partly as a result of his two volumes of verse A Tent for April and The White Centre, but was firmly based on his work in Preview and his role as leader of the Preview Group. In the early summer of 1941,

he and his wife had moved into the garage flat behind Dorchester Street which was to become the centre of Preview, and become friendly with Neufville Shaw, a young research chemist and writer, and with Philip Surrey, the painter, whose wife Margaret Day was to be one of the original members of the Preview Group. Shaw and Anderson discussed the possibility of producing a magazine, and with this in mind approached the established lawyer-poet-professor-socialist F.R. Scott, who had recently returned to Montreal from Harvard, where he had been studying the Canadian Constitution on a Guggenheim Fellowship. Scott, noted since the twenties for his interest in encouraging young writers and developing new little magazines, gave his enthusiastic support; and with the addition of a student named Bruce Ruddick, the first Preview Group was formed.

The original group had five members: Patrick Anderson, F.R. Scott, Bruce Ruddick, Neufville Shaw and Margaret Day; and it was this group which published issue number one of Preview. Four of the five were associated with the magazine throughout its existence; Margaret Day, however, stayed with the group for only three issues, during which time she published only one piece of work: a short story entitled "The Library Book" in Preview 2. When the second issue came out, there was a sixth name on the masthead: that of P.K. Page.

Both Patricia Page and John Sutherland had recently arrived in Montreal from New Brunswick, where they had known each other, and where they had both been prize-winners in the same literary competition. She had been born in England, but had come to Canada as a small child, and attended school in Calgary. Working in Montreal as a stenographer, she came into contact with the group almost by accident, when she met Patrick Anderson at the home of a mutual acquaintance, and was invited to bring

some of her poetry along to a group meeting at Frank Scott's house. She speaks now of her sense of awe in the presence of this group of very confident-seeming writers who were engaged in reading one another's poetry, and especially of her view of F.R. Scott as "an astral figure".¹ (In fact, though her impression was of a group of older people, Anderson, at twenty-seven, was only a year her elder.) Her poems were well-received by the group, two of them were printed in Preview 2, and she remained a member of the group until it disbanded in 1945, when Preview and First Statement merged to form Northern Review.

By April 1942, then, the basic Preview Group had been formed, and was to remain intact until 1945; it is with these five writers, who provided the majority of the works published in Preview, and who formulated the magazine's literary and social aims, that this study is largely concerned. I have chosen not to treat A.M. Klein as a member of the group's inner circle because he was not as intimately concerned with the magazine as were the other five, and published as much work in First Statement as in Preview. While Klein attended some group meetings, and was held in considerable respect and affection by the others, his work shows few signs of being affected by the assumptions about the relationship between literature and society made by Anderson, Scott, Page, Shaw and Ruddick: assumptions which make possible the study of their work in terms of an organic literary group rather than a number of writers who happen to have been friends, and who happened to publish in the same magazine.

It is this aspect of Preview, the magazine as a group collaboration, that has been neglected by Canadian critics on the few occasions that they turned their attention to it², and it was partly for this reason that the present study was conceived of as the literary history of a group

- its growth, its aims, its achievement and its breaking-up, as well as a critical study of the work of the five poets. In Chapter IV, when it becomes necessary to deal with each poet in turn, in order to view his or her work critically, attention will still be paid to the assumptions and attitudes which link the group members, as well as to their individuality and personal achievement. In this way I hope to come to some conclusion as to the effects of the group structure, with its collaboration, discussion and cross-fertilization, on the poetry, in addition to my judgement of the poetry itself, and of the extent to which the Preview venture into "social verse" was successful.

To some extent a judgement of the poetry automatically involves a judgement of the group structure. Preview represents a sincere attempt by a number of writers to collaborate in the production of a kind of social verse which would be able to deal with the whole range of wartime preoccupations, and the group's own political aspirations. Although Scott was the only one of the group who had already achieved any success in this vein, in his work for The McGill Fortnightly Review, The Canadian Mercury and The Canadian Forum, and though Anderson was probably the most influential member of the group in promoting this kind of writing from 1942 to 1945, the whole body of poetry published in Preview can stand examination as a group production: a true collaboration in which a number of young authors brought their attention to bear on the questions of what it was like to be in Canada during the war; how the war itself appeared to them in Canada; how they regarded the coming peace; what they thought was the function of art and literature in the society in which they found themselves; what was the state of Canadian literature; and how they personally reacted to the situation in which they were writing.

What makes this collaboration even more interesting is that its result was not merely a number of poems and short stories built around a few stylistic and literary assumptions, but that the group managed to combine a basic homogeneity with a variety of personal and political philosophies, subject-matter and styles.

An attempt to see the Preview output in terms of a collaboration, while useful as a guide to the nature of the writing and the achievement, should not be taken as an indication that none of the poems published in the magazine deserve study in isolation. Some of the finest poetry of the forties got its first printing in Preview: for example, Klein's "Montreal" and "Bread", P.K. Page's "The Bands and the Beautiful Children" and "Stenographers", F.R. Scott's "Trans Canada" and "Saturday Sundae", and Patrick Anderson's "Winter in Montreal" and "Summer's Joe".

It is necessary to point out in this Introduction that while the background of the World War and the element of collaboration were both important formative influences on Preview, the magazine did not emerge in Montreal simply as a response to these two stimuli, but had its roots also in the work of the first generation of modern Canadian poets in the late twenties and the thirties. It must be remembered that Scott was substantially older than the other members of the group (sixteen years older than Anderson, for example); however, it was logical for Anderson and Shaw to approach him for support in their Preview venture. As representatives of a new generation of modern Canadian poets, they were basing their new developments on the work already done by the thirties generation, of which Scott was a member.

Scott had been a great "magazine man" throughout his career, from his connection with The McGill Fortnightly Review in the twenties, The

Canadian Mercury from 1928 onwards, through his membership of The Canadian Forum's editorial board in the thirties to his part in Preview's 1942 beginnings, and the development into Northern Review in the 1945 merger with First Statement. He was to assist too in the publication of Tamarack Review in 1956. As well as this, Scott had been a co-crusader with A.J.M. Smith at the end of the twenties and into the thirties to bring a new poetry to Canada, and to destroy the old (Romantic) gods. The culmination of this campaign had been the New Provinces anthology of 1936, when Smith, Scott, Klein, Finch, Pratt and Kennedy presented themselves in book form, complete with an explanatory preface, marking a turning point in the development of modern Canadian poetry.

In a way, Preview's literary attitudes were an embodiment of what Scott had been fighting for in Canadian poetry for a decade before the magazine's publication. Ten years previously, Scott had written in The Canadian Forum an article entitled "The Revival of Poetry"³, which set forth his hopes for the genesis of a modern tradition in Canadian poetry to replace the Romantic and imitative. His models in this article were English and American rather than Canadian: Eliot and Owen, Pound and Cummings. He saw the modern movement in poetry as one towards precision of expression, colloquialism, gaiety, and freedom of form engineered by free verse and other formal experiment. The article is not tremendously original, but it represents one part of a long campaign waged by Smith and Scott among others to make clear to the Canadian literary world that the modern movement in poetry was becoming more powerful in Canada; that parochialism (that dread word associated with the Canadian Authors Association) was dead; and that the modern poet simply had to be aware of the advances in his field both in Europe and the United States, and could

not rely solely on his somewhat dubious national tradition for sustenance and organic growth.

Montreal was the scene of intense poetic activity during the war, and the scene too of the second flowering of the modern tradition in Canada, stimulated by the first, and in some ways an extension of it. This tradition in the thirties comprised Smith, Scott, Pratt, Finch, Kennedy, Klein, Birney and Dorothy Livesay, and New Provinces now appears to have been a true milestone in the development of the new poetry. With the wartime expansion of this new tradition, it is interesting to note how many of the thirties poets both assisted and influenced the new writers. We have Anderson's admiration for Scott⁴, and vice-versa⁵; Smith's enthusiastic reviews of Anderson and P.K. Page in the Canadian Forum⁶; guarded praise for Smith's technical achievement in Preview (in Shaw's review of Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry, in Preview 17); P.K. Page's admiration for Dorothy Livesay's work of the thirties, and for Klein⁷; Irving Layton's oft-protested love of Klein⁸, as well as Dudek's regard for the older poet.⁹ Leo Kennedy was not involved in this movement, however, and Pratt was not a favourite poet of the Preview Group: "Pratt's 'Dunkirk' comes unchanged from the propaganda mill, and his description of a whale at play or an eagle sadly considering the first aeroplane merits consideration for National (or rather Canadian) Geographic Magazine. Excitement sustained by exclamation points, expletive, and extenuation does not constitute poetry" (Neufville Shaw, "The Maple Leaf Is Dying", p 17).¹⁰

Finch came in for some rough treatment from John Sutherland in Northern Review Volume One No. 6: a review of Finch's poems which prompted the resignation of the Preview segment of the editorial board; but Shaw had already spoken in the above article of "Robert Finch's glittering

inconsequential". Generally, though, the picture is one of consolidation. Both Page's and Shaw's reviews of contemporary poetry in Preview¹¹ make a point of allying themselves with the first-generation moderns, and of stressing the gap between modern Canadian verse and the previous body of poetry, which they tend to reject as a tradition. Whereas the original experimenters of New Provinces had expressed their admiration for European and American innovators, and their dissociation from what they saw as a colonial and derivative tradition, the new generation in Montreal found that there were native poets whom they could admire, and with whom they could collaborate. It is in this sense that Preview was another stage in the fulfillment of Scott's 1931 hopes for a new kind of Canadian poetry: a kind capable of dealing adequately with the realities of industrial and urban Canada.¹²

The final remarks I must make in this Introduction concern my use of the term "little magazine" to describe Preview. I will continue to refer to Preview as a magazine for the sake of convenience, but it would be as well to make clear at this point that it was never a magazine in the usual sense of the word; that is, it was never on sale to the public via booksellers and magazine racks. The editors' own description of it is "A Literary Letter", and the first words in the first issue make clear what this means: "This is no magazine. It presents five Montreal writers who recently formed themselves into a group for the purpose of mutual discussion and criticism, and who hope, through these selections, to try out their work before a somewhat larger public." (P 1).

Each issue of Preview consisted simply of nine or ten mimeographed sheets stapled together, and contained around eight poems and short prose pieces by members of the group, and occasionally by writers from outside

it. The title Preview was appropriate in that what was being sent to subscribers (of whom there were generally around two hundred) was a selection of the work in progress of a number of writers. The format, distribution and purpose of the magazine had several important effects on its character, which will be discussed in the following Chapter in the context of an examination of the "Preview ethos".

CHAPTER II

ATTITUDES, INFLUENCES, AND REPUTATION: THE PREVIEW ETHOS AND THE PREVIEW CRITICS

The beginning of Preview was really a single-issue "magazine" produced by my wife and myself as a present to our friends. It consisted of four or five mimeographed foolscap sheets, stapled at the top left corner, with the name - The Andersons - written across the top in Indian ink. It contained a short story by me, "The Plotter" (set in New York), a poem never re-published and a line-drawing by Peggy. . . we moved into the garage flat behind Dorchester Street in the early summer of 1941, and that flat became the centre of Preview. It was small and very, very cold.¹

These remarks by Patrick Anderson on the beginnings of Preview make clear that the prototype of the magazine was produced for distribution to his personal friends. Preview retained throughout its existence something of The Andersons' personal and informal character: "an example of work in progress within the group", as the editorial in Preview 6 put it. In two important respects, Preview remained unaltered through its twenty-three issues. Firstly, it was never printed on a press; it remained to the end a dozen or so mimeographed sheets, stapled together and sent out to subscribers, retaining the character of a "Literary Letter". Secondly, it remained the means of expression of the original group of five, with the occasional addition of Klein; eleven of the issues contain only their work, and in the remaining twelve, the majority of the contributions come from them. Equally important, all the manifestoes and literary criticism that appeared in Preview were written by four of the main group: Anderson, Scott, Shaw and P.K. Page.

These two characteristics of Preview - its format and distribution and its group function - had far-reaching effects on the nature of the work

written for publication in it, and upon the ethos of the group itself. Most of these effects will be dealt with in detail further on, but it would be as well to point them out here, in view of their importance to an understanding of the group.

In some ways it is a tribute to the quality of the work published in Preview that its influence and fame transcended the limitations imposed by its dependence upon subscribers and its somewhat amateur appearance: it drew praise from the editors of much more well-established publications such as Poetry (Chicago), Horizon and New Directions.² It is true that while Preview was the springboard for the success or continuing development of most of the group's members, the publication of poems by Anderson, P.K. Page and Scott in Poetry (Chicago), The Canadian Forum and A.J.M. Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry in 1943 were also instrumental in bringing their wartime work to the notice of the public and the literary world. Also, these three had volumes of poetry published at the end of the war, around the time that Preview ceased publication. Anderson published A Tent For April in the "First Statement New Writers" series in 1945, and followed it in 1946 with Ryerson's publication of The White Centre. Both these collections contained several poems first printed in Preview, as did P.K. Page's contribution to Unit of Five in 1944, and her own As Ten As Twenty which Ryerson published in 1946. F.R. Scott's first published book of poems was Overture in 1945, and this too made most of his Preview work available to a wider audience. Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw were the only regular members of the group who never published a separate volume of their own poetry.

Nevertheless, it was almost inevitable that the Preview Group should, at least during the lifetime of the magazine, become somewhat

introverted in their literary attitudes. By this I do not mean to imply that the group withdrew from the world in order to write and to encourage one another; in fact they were committed to the opposite procedure, whereby they attempted to see their work consistently in terms of the society in which they lived and wrote. The introversion to which I refer is not necessarily completely negative in nature: it brings with it both advantages and limitations. The group, and the magazine, was turned in on itself in that it was always difficult for poetry and criticism of a radically different kind from that of the group to get a hearing in Preview. This does not seem to have been a deliberate group policy; in fact there are several pleas throughout the two-and-a-half years for more outside contributions and literary criticism, and Preview was founded with the intention of providing an outlet for young Canadian writers, as well as for the group itself. Nevertheless, to a young Montreal writer First Statement (founded by John Sutherland shortly after the appearance of Preview), or Alan Crawley's Contemporary Verse (founded in 1941), must have seemed a more congenial or promising outlet for his or her own poetry or prose; not because these other magazines published better quality writing, but because they were both press-printed (First Statement after August 1943), and because Preview could not help but give the impression of being primarily concerned with the group.

Two examples may illustrate the negative half of the Preview ethos. The first may be found in Preview 8, where a correspondent named Allan Anderson raises some objections to Patrick Anderson's review of Stephen Spender's Ruins and Vision, entitled "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense", in Preview 7. His letter does, admittedly, assume a rather bellicose tone, and spend too much time in attacking Anderson personally, but

Patrick Anderson, commenting on the letter, rises to the bait and responds in an annoyingly schoolboyish manner:

What is Mr. Anderson driving at? ... Mr. Anderson's qualifications as a critic strike me as dubious.... I cannot see that this incipient editor of a progressive paper has either disposed of my points or done much to justify his bellicose intervention. Nevertheless I can honestly say that I welcome his letter, because any criticism, however crude, is, in the present state of Canadian letters, better than none.

(P 8)

The last sentence succeeds admirably in discouraging criticism in the process of encouraging it. The vision of Patrick Anderson, with his foot on a prostrate correspondent, inviting "criticism, however crude", was hardly one to promote enthusiasm: no more letters or literary criticism from outside the group appeared in the magazine. What Anderson's comments on his namesake's letter seemed to suggest was that the editor of Preview was somewhat astounded to be attacked on his home territory, and had responded in the most cutting manner he could muster.

The second example is even more striking, and seems to back up the impression made by the first. Shortly after Preview began, two other Montreal writers applied to join the group: one was John Sutherland, whom P.K. Page knew from New Brunswick, and who was to some extent a friend of Anderson; the other was Irving Layton, whose wife, John Sutherland's sister, was a friend of Peggy Anderson. Their application was rejected by the group, and it was partly as a reaction to this rejection that First Statement was established in opposition to Preview. In some ways, then, the separation of the two camps and the production of two magazines may have produced a stimulating atmosphere of competition in Montreal's literary world, of the kind stressed by Wynne Francis in the only published study devoted to the forties in Montreal.³ In the context

of a study of Preview itself, however, the rejection of two of the most important figures in the literary history of the forties is an insight into the dangers of forming an overly exclusive group in order to foster one's writing. It may have been that the original group members considered that for practical purposes it was unwise to increase the number of members (bearing in mind that the Preview group was in the habit of meeting frequently to discuss the progress of their work, and the presence of too many members might have destroyed the rapport of the group). But retrospective comments made by Anderson in 1969 suggest that more than practical issues were at stake in the rejection of Layton and Sutherland: "Generally we thought of ourselves as more European and I suppose technically sophisticated than our rivals in - vaguely - 'the West', or than the naively raucous (?) First Statement people."⁴

One of the results of the exclusion from the group of someone as dynamic as John Sutherland was that Anderson's influence on Preview met with little resistance from within the group. This was not altogether a bad thing, for Anderson had interesting ideas about the function of poetry and of Canadian little magazines in wartime, which will be discussed in Chapter II, and was himself a fine poet - something recent commentators on Preview⁵ have been inclined to ignore. It did mean, however, that his excesses tended to go unchecked, and one finds occasional editorial passages like the following: "Our task is clear: not only to help in the winning of the war by our literary work and our vivid enthusiastic embodiment of the issues for which it is being fought, but also to supply something of the personal, the graceful and the heroic to the atmosphere of this half-empty dominion." (P 11)

Apart from the superb pomposity of this statement, and its "Englishness" (one can imagine the reaction of Layton and Sutherland, had they been

in the group, to the idea of Patrick Anderson bringing a little of the graceful to this half-empty Dominion), one's first thought is that the channels through which Anderson's own "Night Out" ("Where old men mumble in decrepitude / or fallen over tables lay their loose cheeks"), or P.K. Page's story about a man talking to a cow, come to help in the winning of the war, are mysterious indeed.

The "introversion" of the group was certainly responsible to some extent for the appearance of such purple passages in Preview, but it also had its advantages, in its fostering of that group enterprise which is one of the most interesting aspects of Preview. It is the pomposity of the editorials, however, which has struck the literary critics who have dealt with Preview. Often, the critics' dislike of what they deduce from the Anderson editorials to be the Preview ethos has led them to disregard the more intelligent and positive side of the magazine and the group. I think it is true to say that Preview has been treated neither particularly well nor particularly carefully by Canadian literary critics and historians. The question is not one of large-scale misjudgement nor of massive critical blindness to Preview's virtues, but rather one of the criteria by which the magazine has been judged, and the contexts in which critical studies of it have appeared. The second of these is the easier to elucidate: it means that almost all the available studies of Preview are to be found in literary histories of Canada or in articles on the forties in Montreal. In actual fact, there has been no article-length study of the Preview Group; the most comprehensive essay at present available is Wynne Francis's "Montreal Poets of the Forties", published in Canadian Literature in 1962, and this views wartime Montreal from the point of view of First Statement, with a commentary from Irving Layton, and hence

presents a somewhat jaundiced view of Preview. "Montreal Poets of the Forties" has more serious defects as a guide to Preview, to which I return in a moment, but I want first to deal briefly with some more influential, if more cursory, opinions.

The student who is looking for a second opinion on one of the less well-tilled fields of Canadian literature, where there is little published critical material available (and Preview is such a field) has recourse to two or three standard critical histories or anthologies: Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada, Carl F. Klinck's Literary History of Canada or A.J.M. Smith's anthology Masks of Poetry. He could also try The Oxford Companion to Canadian History and Literature, which in this case would simply refer him to Wynne Francis.⁶ In many cases these histories would not deserve close attention, but the case of Preview is complicated by the fact that not only is there little other criticism devoted to the magazine, or to the work of Anderson and Page, but Preview itself, because of its limited circulation and mimeographed format, is extremely difficult to get hold of, and a complete set of twenty-three is rare indeed. (Rare enough for Patrick Anderson to admit that today he has not a single copy left in his possession!) As a result, many readers wishing to form a rounded view of the development of modern Canadian poetry in the forties are forced to place some faith in the literary histories; and in Canadian poetry anthologies, since Anderson's three books of poetry are long out of print.

Whatever one's opinion of Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada as a whole, as one reads its patronising dismissal of the aims and achievements of Preview, it is liable to strike one that the author's critical criteria are not of a kind that allow him to examine the magazine

sympathetically. Two of the most interesting questions that a reading of Preview raises today concern the possibility of writing a kind of poetry that is both politically and aesthetically interesting, and the nature of the forces working both within and through a closely-knit literary group: Creative Writing in Canada is not the book to deal competently with either of these questions.

As regards the intention of the group to attempt "a fusion of the lyric and didactic elements in modern verse."⁷ Pacey's attitude is that of the rational and faintly amused liberal: "It is easy to have the wisdom of hindsight; easy to see how wrong these critics were in thinking that poetry was having any real effect on the war effort, or that utopian socialism was soon to be realized in the Dominion of the North."⁸

The critics referred to are Anderson and Sutherland, and the implication is that their critical principles would have been justified had the socialists won power in 1945, whereas since we all know that the Liberals won the election quite comfortably the attitudes of Preview and First Statement now seem rather ridiculous. Apart from the fact that there was a time during the war when the CCF overtook the Liberals in the Gallup poll (September 1943, when the national figures were CCF 29%, Liberals 28%⁹), which suggests that the group's socialist hopes were not simply idle fantasies, the charge of "utopian socialism" does less than justice to the work of the Preview Group. But Pacey's book, being essentially a linked series of monographs on Canadian writers, cannot accommodate a detailed study of the group as a group rather than a number of more or less competent poets; so for his brief résumé of the intentions of the magazine Pacey goes to the manifestoes, especially the more vulner-

able of them. If one stops short at Preview's editorials as an indication of the nature of the magazine's contents, as Pacey seems to do, it is hard not to come to the same conclusions as he does that "There was so much solemn cant about it: one would have thought the whole Canadian war effort, the very defeat of Fascism, depended on the continued existence of this little mimeographed monthly."¹⁰

This would be a just and crippling indictment of Preview if the editorials represented the whole of the story, which they do not. In fact, the sentences extracted from Anderson's editorials and set forth in the literary histories as illustrative of the Preview mentality are usually the more crass statements in the editorials themselves, and thus far from representative of the whole range of the group's manifestoes (the subject of Chapter III of this study), let alone the entire achievement of the whole twenty-three issues. The two usual selections are: "Two events of great importance to the writer have occurred in recent weeks. One is the Russian offensive, the other the conference at Casablanca."¹¹ and "All anti-fascists, we feel that the existence of a war between democratic culture and the paralysing forces of dictatorship only intensifies the writer's obligation to work."¹²

There is no denying the pomposity of these sentences, taken out of context, but it may be worth noting that while Desmond Pacey sees the first of them as cant, he omits to quote the sentence that immediately precedes it in Preview 11: "...we have lived long enough in Montreal to realize the frustrating and inhibiting effects of isolation." It is important to see Preview as a reaction to this sense of isolation combined with socialist ambitions, and that when its tone became pompous or shrill it was perhaps not because it was absurdly sure of its own efficacy,

but simply because that efficacy must have seemed dubious at times. Likewise, to use Anderson's statement about the need to "help in the winning of the war by our literary work" from Preview 11 as the basis of a generalisation about the group's mistaken conviction that poetry was winning the war against fascism, as Pacey does, is really to use one aspect of Preview to discredit the whole.

I have dealt with Desmond Pacey's objections to Preview at this length and at this stage not because they represent a particularly comprehensive approach to the subject, but because they seem to have been influential, in the absence of other critical opinion, in promoting the idea that Preview is not worth reading; and while I disagree with this estimate and hope to counter it with a detailed study of the magazine it is perhaps best to outline the "standard" view and approach. Klinck's edition of Literary History of Canada did not advance any radically different opinions on the subject when it was published in 1966, fourteen years after the original edition of Creative Writing in Canada, and Milton Wilson's essay "Other Canadians and After" in Masks of Poetry¹³ deals mainly with the aftermath of the Preview and First Statement Groups rather than with the magazines themselves. This leaves Wynne Francis as the major source of information about the basic history of the Preview Group.

"Montreal Poets of the Forties" has its good points as a guide to the forties in Montreal, in that it attempts to convey the sense of excitement and the extent of the achievement involved in the first appearance of Anderson, Layton, Sutherland, Page, Dudek and Souster on the Canadian literary scene. However, it tends to deal in personalities rather than in poetry, and to add an air of melodrama to its subject-matter. Mrs. Francis's article, first published in 1962, and lavishly

decked with reflections and recollections from Irving Layton, creates from the conflict between the two magazines a full-scale war, with First Statement as patriotic guerillas assaulting the establishment in the form of Preview! "Their accomplishments, age, prestige, sophistication and talent all combined to present an irresistible target for the raw impecunious parvenus of Stanley Street."¹⁴ This is a misleading picture. I am not concerned here to deprecate the achievements of Souster and Layton, or to deny that they seem to have emerged as the major figures who moved from the promising forties to the established fifties. It is rather the melodrama presented by Wynne Francis that deserves to be questioned, as well as the factual accuracy of her remarks about Preview.

F.R. Scott has confined himself to saying that Preview "stimulated and kept alive" First Statement¹⁵; P.K. Page is even less conscious of there having been an out-and-out rivalry between the two groups:

I remember one occasion a room was taken at the Ritz, for Preview and First Statement to argue out something...whether it was nationalism or internationalism, or what it was, I know it was a very emotion-fraught evening!... My memory of it is that the groups were pretty well separate. One saw Layton occasionally, because Layton wasn't the sort of person you didn't see, and one saw Dudek occasionally, and I didn't have very much to do with them after the First Statement thing got going.¹⁶

To some extent, of course, the nature of a rivalry must remain a matter of opinion, especially when seen in retrospect. But Mrs. Francis's statement about the respective ages and social standing of the two groups seems definitely misleading; when she says that: "Several of them were comfortably established professionally in the fields of teaching, law and medicine...the Preview elders in many cases represented father images. Several of them were McGill professors."

F.R. Scott was indeed a McGill professor; but Bruce Ruddick was

not at that time even a student in medicine, and so far from being "established professionally in medicine", though he was later to achieve this status. Patrick Anderson was teaching at a boys' school in Montreal, and earning \$125 a month for only ten months of the year, which hardly placed him in the ranks of the bourgeoisie. P.K. Page was a stenographer, and the more well-established Klein joined the group quite late in the magazine's life. The ages of the members of the respective groups in 1942 were much more evenly matched than "Montreal Poets of the Forties" would suggest. F.R. Scott was forty-three and Klein thirty-three, but Layton himself was thirty; though Dudek was twenty-four and Souster only twenty-one, Anderson and Page were only twenty-seven and twenty-six respectively. So the bourgeois ambiance bestowed on the Preview Group by Mrs. Francis, which helps her in her treatment of their radical sentiments as those of poseurs ("Patrick Anderson, proletarian by choice, Canadian by desire, and poet aflame with purpose"), strikes one as relatively untrue.

The total impression one gains from the immediately available critical material, then, is not particularly favourable to Preview. From Desmond Pacey the idea that its aim of a social verse backed by a socialist ideology was by definition both doomed and ephemeral; from both Pacey and Milton Wilson the idea that the group showed some promise, produced the odd good poem, but achieved little; and from Wynne Francis an article which completed the process of suggesting that the group's work is unreadable or not worth reading by suggesting that its role was historical: to stimulate Irving Layton (Mr. Layton is quoted as saying that it did). It will be the purpose of the following Chapters to show that Preview does in fact possess virtues which make it worthy of attention today, and to illustrate the contribution made by the group to the Canadian literary scene.

Milton Wilson, Desmond Pacey and Wynne Francis all agree in diagnosing the influence of W.H. Auden on the poetry of the group, and of Dylan Thomas on Patrick Anderson, and it is true that while the group had, as I mentioned in Chapter I, found support and inspiration in the thirties poets from Canada, they were extremely catholic in their tastes, and open to influences from many quarters. The more important poetic influences on the group seem to have been English rather than American. They were greatly influenced by the English poets of the thirties, and had, like their contemporaries in England, an ambivalent mixture of admiration for and disappointment in the work of Auden and Spender. Eliot's influence, in terms of technique, is evident; and Anderson's admiration for Dylan Thomas and Rilke seems to have affected his own poetry, and through it the rest of the group.

Of these influences, the most important to the group as a whole in terms of style, attitudes and themes was that of W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender. Auden had written of Freud in his poem "In Memory of Sigmund Freud" that

if often he was wrong and, at times, absurd,
to us he is no more a person
now but a whole climate of opinion

under whom we conduct our different lives:¹⁷

and already, in 1942, to judge from his pervasive influence on the work of the Preview Group, Auden himself had become "a whole climate of opinion" to a new generation of poets. Though Auden has continued to publish regularly, his name is still linked today with those of Christopher Isherwood, Stephen Spender and Louis MacNeice; with the Spanish Civil War; with the rise of socially-orientated poetry in England in the thirties; and with

the decade that led to the Second World War. To the Preview Group, writing a little over a decade after Auden and Spender's first appearance, and when Auden himself was still only thirty-five years of age, the importance of the achievement of these two, and its relation to what they were attempting in Canada, seems to have been obvious. Anderson tells in his autobiography how a flutter went through the group when Auden was reported to have been seen reading Preview in Washington¹⁸; the two are mentioned in many Preview critical articles, and Spender is the subject of the longest article devoted to one writer to appear in Preview: Anderson's "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense" in Preview 7. The attitude of the group towards the development of Auden and Spender in the forties is far from wholly complimentary, and in his facetious poem "To T.S. Eliot and Others" published in Northern Review in 1949, Anderson is not over-reverent in his references to them. Articles like "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense", and Shaw's "Old Elizabeth and New George" were born of a disappointment in the wartime work of Auden and Spender, which seemed to represent a retreat from the intellectual revolutionary frontier. However, these poets had been in the centre of a poetic movement in the thirties which had prefigured Preview in many ways, and without which it is doubtful whether the Preview Group could have begun as confidently as it did. When one looks at the work written in the thirties by poets like MacNeice, Day Lewis, Auden, Caudwell, Barker and Spender, it becomes apparent how they forged an idiom which Preview was to take over, modify to fit the Canadian scene and the changed situation of the forties and a global war, and blend with its native Canadian influences. These poets of the thirties were socialist; they made in their verse a Marxian and Freudian analysis of European society and culture; one finds throughout

their work a presentation of the idea of positive community, which they opposed to the moribund capitalism against which their energies were directed; a somewhat guilty admiration for the proletariat from their own bourgeois-born sensibilities; and the notion of war is central in their work. It is best to point out, however, that while the Preview Group were able to take over some of the thirties poets' ideas about the inter-relationship of poetry, war, and capitalism, the war with which the Canadians were dealing, and which had given rise to their magazine, was of a radically different kind from that which had preoccupied Auden and Spender in the mid-thirties.

The Spanish Civil War had seemed to those involved a struggle between a democratically-elected and increasingly left-wing government against fascist forces which it was imperative to halt. Because participation in the Civil War had been for foreign intellectuals a matter of free individual choice, the war itself came to stand for committed and effective action. Three years later, it was impossible to regard the World War, with its conscription and its warring capitalist powers, in the same way. To many it seemed a compromise: a matter of fighting an evil system with a slightly better one. Henry Treece, the English poet, summed up the difference between the two wars in his essay "Growing Up in Wartime", written during the 1939-45 war: "But in 1939 the present war had all the terror and inevitability of cancer; the nightmare had to proceed, however much the patient screamed, protested his innocence, his frightened inability to bear the pain."¹⁹

Whereas for Auden and Spender Spain had been a military counterpart of the ideological war they had been fighting since 1930, to the younger members of Preview it was the beginning: an event in Europe

which marked the arrival of their adulthood and the birth of their political consciousness. "...Spain was our spade: / the flares went up in the garden. / we dug at night--" wrote P.K. Page in "Generation" (P 8), describing the end of her generation's adolescence. World War Two came as Anderson, Shaw, Ruddick and P.K. Page were bursting into print; for Auden and Spender it had arrived, cancer-like, at the end of the decade they had been predicting as diseased and decadent. They did not approach it with fervour. Day Lewis commented bitterly:

It is the logic of our times,
 No subject for immortal verse-
 That we who lived by honest dreams
 Defend the bad against the worse
"Where Are the War Poets?"²⁰

Nevertheless, the poetry of Auden and Spender had a great influence on Preview. In many cases, Spender's work was more congenial to the group. Patrick Anderson's remark in Preview 8 that any poetry "full of common humanity" tends to advance the radical cause and express its ideals, and Neufville Shaw's picture in "Old Elizabeth and New George" (P 13) of the English poets of the thirties climbing aboard a train of revolution that never pulled out of the station, both show a realization that neither a poetry which attacks its enemies without embodying its own human ideals, nor eager and unambiguous propaganda for world socialism, were likely to be successful artistically. So for the Fabian socialism of Scott and the radical concern of Shaw and Ruddick, Spender's constant insistence on compassion was inspiring: Spender's armies sleeping in each other's arms in "Two Armies" are extremely close in conception to Scott's "Enemies" (P 16) who are engaged in a strange mating through hatred, about to produce an offspring whose disposition no-one can be sure of. Likewise,

Spender's extremely subtly phrased nostalgia and element of doubt at the end of "The Express", which suggest that the revolution inevitably destroys as it creates, are akin to the searching and questioning of Shaw and Ruddick:

Ah, like a comet through flame, she moves entranced,
 Wrapt in her music no bird song, no, nor bough
 Breaking with honey buds, shall ever equal.
(Collected Poems, 55.)

The tension between the denial of the birdsong, boughs and honey buds and the delightful impression left by their presentation makes for an ambiguity in the last line of the same kind as that which is central to Shaw's poem "Platitudes of Necessity" (P 8).

But Anderson's finest poems on the war itself, "Bombing Berlin" (P 18) and "The Self Is Steep"²¹, are a development of Auden's insights into the nature of a deeply disordered society and its relation to the individual disturbed mind. "The Self Is Steep" moves as easily and convincingly from individual introversion and claustrophobia to the psychological make-up of wartime Germany as Auden's "In Memory of W.B. Yeats" does from the external struggle to the psychological one:

In the nightmare of the dark
 All the dogs of Europe bark
 And the living nations wait,
 Each sequestered in its hate;

 Intellectual disgrace
 Stares from every human face
 And the seas of pity lie
 Locked and frozen in each eye.²²

In other poems too, such as the study of the deserter in "Portrait" (P 1), continue this important task of joining the personal and the social, not as yoked opposites, but as parts of an organism; and this is

one of the most important aspects of the Auden heritage.

Stylistically, however, P.K. Page is closer than Anderson to W.H. Auden, in her precision and cool clarity of metaphor, and in her knowing and rhetorical approach to the reader. There is a striking similarity of tone between these pairs of opening lines:

If it were you, say, you
 who scanning the personal map one day knew
 your sharp eyes water and grow colour-blind,²³⁾
 (Page: "If It Were You"

Since you are going to begin today,
 Let us consider what it is you do.
 (Auden: "Venus Will Now Say a Few Words"²⁴⁾

Let us by paradox
 choose a Catholic close
 for innocence.
 (Page: "Poem" P 18)

Will you turn a deaf ear
 To what they said on the shore?
 (Auden: "The Questioner Who Sits So Sly"²⁵⁾

There is a tightness about P.K. Page's style that is very close to Auden's compression, and a toughness in her demands upon the reader that is also reminiscent of the English poet. Anderson's style, in comparison, is looser, less disciplined, and more Romantically personal. The chief stylistic influence diagnosed by Desmond Pacey, Milton Wilson and Wynne Francis is Dylan Thomas; and in terms of the rhythms of the poetry, and Anderson's bardic stance, this influence seems hard to deny. But Anderson's highly conscious use of alliteration and disrupted syntax resembles no-one so much as G.M. Hopkins. For example, certain lines from "Wild Duck"²⁶ show definite echoes of a particular Hopkins sonnet, both in their use of alliteration and use of short syntactic units of a startling

nature to build up a composite picture of a scene:

As kingfishers catch fire, dragonflies draw flame;
As tumbled over rim in roundy wells
Stones ring; like each tucked string tells...²⁷

Thus Hopkins; and in Anderson's poem we find "as anchored toy to acrobat", "coloured beyond caring", "fell feathers in a weight" and "plump and plumage".

There seem to be clear stylistic similarities, as well as some more general similarities in the poets' aims which I shall return to in my detailed study of Anderson in Chapter IV. Suffice to say here that Anderson, like Hopkins, is far from the Imagist tradition of an austere, direct poetry, which has exerted such an influence on modern Canadian poets such as W.W.E. Ross, Dorothy Livesay, Dudek and Souster, the later F.R. Scott of Signature, and the newer West Coast poets.

Anderson claims Rilke as his main influence (in reply to a questionnaire in 1969); and one can indeed find parallels between, for example, No. XIII of the first series of Sonnets to Orpheus, and Anderson's "An Apple Before Bedtime" from The Colour As Naked and "Adam" from A Tent For April, both of which, like Rilke's sonnet, use the apple -- its taste, appearance and feel in the hand -- as a symbol of the human desire to know, understand, feel and express a totality of experience with maximum intensity.

In the same questionnaire, Anderson confesses that the group were derivative at times, but stresses that they were not blind to the extent of their derivations: this was part of their attempt to produce poetry in Canada which was aware of what had already been written in Europe as well as in Canada itself. Reading Preview, one feels that the contribu-

tors were indeed well aware of the various traditions in which they were working, and of the extent of their debt to previous writers; they were a highly self-conscious group, who constantly examined and defined their own work -- often in public. Chapter III, the first half of the detailed study of the magazine itself, will deal with the group's manifestoes, and their literary and social ideas as expressed in prose articles and criticism in the magazine.

CHAPTER III

THE PREVIEW "MANIFESTO"

There are fifteen pieces of prose throughout Preview which, in criticism, review, explanation and analysis, represent a composite group manifesto. Most of these pieces are by Anderson, Scott, P.K. Page and Shaw; the majority (five signed pieces) by Anderson. Only two of the fifteen set out to be "Preview Manifestoes": the statement at the head of Preview 1, and the section entitled "Ourselves" in Preview 11. These two statements of intent are the most commonly quoted examples of "Preview's attitudes"¹; unfortunately, both (especially "Ourselves") contain utterances from Anderson at his most pompous, and are not reliable guides to the nature of Preview's contents, though they do provide some insight into Anderson's feelings at this time.

Though the remaining thirteen articles are not strictly speaking manifestoes, they are homogeneous enough in their ideas to give some idea of what the group regarded as Preview's aims, and what they saw as the relationship between their poetry and their society and times. For example, Anderson's "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense" (P 7) and "A Reply" (P 8), and Shaw's "Old Elizabeth and New George" (P 13) define Preview's attitude towards the English poets of the thirties; the other criticism -- Scott's "A Note on Canadian War Poetry" (P 9), Shaw's "The Maple Leaf Is Dying" (P 17) and P.K. Page's "Canadian Poetry 1942" (P 8) -- deals with the Canadian literary tradition; the group's notes on their own poetry in Preview 21, "An Explanatory Issue", provide an indication of how they saw themselves and how they wished to have their poetry read;

Shaw's "Wasteland" (P 8) and Scott's "War and the Universities" (P 11) discuss the value of intellectual and artistic work in wartime; and Preview 11 makes explicit the relationship between the poetry and its Montreal setting, in its series of "Civilian Reports".

These articles deal with two main issues. Firstly, they explore the relevance of Canadian and English literary tradition to the development of Canadian poetry in the forties. Secondly, they discuss the place of the writer in wartime: generally, in as far as he is involved in the war against Fascism, and particularly, the role of the writer of radical convictions in Canadian wartime society. The emphasis was thus cultural and literary rather than political, for Preview was primarily a literary magazine with social and radical concerns, rather than a left-wing magazine which published poetry. It was not really concerned with economic analysis, with labour movements (except for Shaw's "Electrical Plant" in Preview 11), or with propaganda for the CCF, the League for Socialist Reconstruction or the Labor Progressive Party (in whose office Anderson's wife Peggy frequently had Preview mimeographed). One can read through the entire twenty-three issues without finding a detailed political analysis like Martin Ellis's "The Teheran Line", which appeared in First Statement in October/November 1944², and which outlined the aims of the Labor Progressive Party. Though F.R. Scott, as a democratic socialist, could hardly have been associated with a manifesto for the LPP, he could have written in political terms in Preview about the CCF or his own LSR. The fact that he never attempted such an article for Preview indicates that he saw the magazine in literary terms: it was small enough, without having political articles reduce the amount of poetry it could carry. As a result, even the more general and amateur kind of

political analysis, such as Irving Layton's "Let's Win the Peace" from the May 1944 First Statement, is absent from Preview.

The aims expressed in the group's articles are rather those of the cultural wing of a radical movement: "a radical movement" in general terms, to include the whole spectrum of left-wing opinion in Montreal. There were some definite individual allegiances: Patrick Anderson and his wife became communists during Preview's lifetime, and he spoke or recited at LPP meetings; F.R. Scott was involved in the League for Socialist Reconstruction, and in the CCF, and is still associated with the New Democratic Party; A.M. Klein was also interested in the CCF. But Preview was not simply an organ of any of these movements: the group's diversity saw to that. Neufville Shaw comments: "...A.M. Klein was a Zionist wearing a socialist hat, Bruce and I were still Marxist -- although both of us were recovering from a rash of hard-line Stalinism -- P.K. was a political innocent, though compassion finally drover her somewhat to the left."³

The resulting amalgam was beneficial to Preview. It is easy to rely on the literary histories of the forties and come away with the impression that Preview stood for a kind of doggerel which pounded out some party line, which was certainly not the case. Moreover, one should not be misled into thinking that Patrick Anderson's more bombastic manifestoes -- those that have been seized upon by critics -- represent the whole of the editorial policy. All the members, with the exception of Klein, had something to say on the subject of their own work and its aims. The following discussion treats the articles as they relate to two main topics: firstly the poetry the group admired, and that which they themselves aspired to write, and secondly their presentation of Preview as

part of the socialist movement in Canada.

Of the book reviews and articles of literary criticism, there are three which deal primarily with Auden and Spender in the thirties, and their development in the forties: "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense" (P 7) and "A Reply" (P 8) by Anderson, and Neufville Shaw's "Old Elizabeth and New George" (P 13). Four others deal with Canadian poetry and art in the forties: Scott's "A Note On Canadian War Poetry" (P 9), P.K. Page's "Canadian Poetry 1942" (P 8), and Shaw's "Wasteland" (P 8) and "The Maple Leaf Is Dying" (P 17). Preview 21, "An Explanatory Issue" has the group suggesting a procedure for practical criticism, and offering comments on their own poems.

Common to many of these pieces is a stress on the need for a broadly-based humanistic poetry which will attempt to bridge what Anderson calls rather vaguely the "gap...between the artist and society" (P 8). One way which such poetry could escape from the special category under which it has been filed away from common experience is through the use of the events of contemporary history as its subject-matter: "Many readers of poetry would welcome a poet capable of handling a theme such as the Russian defence of Stalingrad." ("A Reply") But more fundamental than this is the need for a poetry rich in common humanity, which has a sense of social justice born of a knowledge of the human-ness of large numbers of individuals. In "A Reply" Anderson suggests that such poetry need not be consciously socialist. The alienation of poetry from society can indeed be overcome by a "definitely socialist writer" like John Cornford, whose concerns are ipse facto social; on the other hand: "...he [the writer] could remain a semi-socialist, a liberal, a mystic or whatever -- provided his work identified itself so strongly with the masses,

was so full of common humanity, that it succeeded in expressing the life, aims and dreams of the people." (P 8)

Anderson goes on to cite Karl Shapiro as a writer whose work fulfils these requirements. The idea of a poetry "full of common humanity" is an attractive one, but it is not examined closely enough by Anderson in this restricted context ("A Reply" is an answer to a letter attacking Anderson's review in Preview 7 of Ruins and Visions). For example, the use of "identifying with the masses" as a synonym for "common humanity" restricts the pleasing broadness of the latter expression. Why should the liberal poet Anderson count an ally identify with the proletariat rather than with any other class? To Anderson, the Marxist, identification with the workers seems the only way to a creative common humanity in art, but would the mystic see the class struggle as the greatest unifying factor in mankind? Would not the "common humanity" of the liberal and the mystic transcend the class system as far as their sense of justice would allow?

The question then arises as to how far Anderson intends this poetry which will succeed in "expressing the life, aims and dreams of the people" to be accessible to the people themselves. If we grant that Brecht was capable of an expression which could be understood by those he championed, the obvious rejoinder is that the complexity of Anderson's own poetry makes it accessible only to those with a fairly sophisticated knowledge of modern poetry: a predominantly bourgeois audience. This is a contradiction to which we will be forced to return in assessing Preview's attempt to embody its own aims. Either the idea of a poetry full of common humanity must not be identified with a working-class audience, or we must judge the Preview verse as an attempt to communicate to such an

audience, in which case its style was ludicrously inappropriate and its means of distribution absurd. The fact that Anderson began En Masse as a magazine aimed more at the workers' audience suggests that he himself found that the attempt to write poetry full of the "feel of people" was not necessarily synonymous with expressing the dreams of the proletariat in such a way that all sections of society would be moved by them.

In fact, it was impossible for members of the group to think that they were reaching a proletarian audience. Asked in 1969 whether he saw Preview as a means of having his work widely read, Neufville Shaw replied tartly: "Widely read? The circulation of Preview was seldom if ever over two hundred."⁴ Shaw himself, when making his plea for a broadly humanistic art, took care not to over-emphasise its class implications. In "Wasteland" he objects to the nature of the paintings which had been donated by Montreal artists for auction on behalf of the Spanish Civil War cause: "They were cold pictures of the Laurentians, still lives, street scenes without people, in fact everything save the depiction of the cause motivating the donation -- love of the individual." (p 8)

While this complaint is related to "A Reply" in its call for an art full of "the feel of people", it sorts somewhat awkwardly with Anderson's "Stephen Spender and the Tragic Sense", which examines Spender's movement away from the social themes of his thirties poetry to the more personal poems of Ruins and Visions, which Anderson sees as representing a tragic view of life. This review is rather confused; Anderson seems at first to be saying that the "love of the individual" advocated by Shaw is insufficient, and to be attacking Spender for abandoning the treatment of social issues involved in the war. He finds Ruins and Visions "curiously full of melancholy personal poems" and comments:

But most remarkable of all is the detached and despairing note of the poems on war. Can this be the same poet who took such an active part in support of the Spanish Government?...Spender speaks of the "boring burned city" in a world "where everything stops but the wishes that kill"...Such poems illustrate with great poignancy the problem of the artist in wartime. They show even less of the "affirming flame" than has recently glowed in the poems of W.H. Auden....Is it then the fate of the bourgeois or democratic poet to lose himself in his "death wishes" and nostalgia...?

(P 7)

The tone of this passage is not wholly sympathetic towards Spender's problems in writing in wartime: his need to reconcile a sense of the tragic with social necessity and the moral issues involved in the war. But finally Anderson changes tack. He is not, he says, attacking Spender's detachment as such, but the thinness of sensibility and limitation of outlook that his "tragic detachment" brings. What disturbs Anderson is "the tendency towards abstraction, the absence of people and the 'feel' of people, the reedy public school note."

The change of attack makes Anderson's position safer than it would otherwise have been. By claiming that Spender's volume loses in intensity through its attempt to concentrate on the individual and his isolated suffering he is making a valid comparison between Ruins and Visions and earlier volumes. There is indeed a reasonable case to make for the fact that "To Natasha" from Ruins and Visions suffers in comparison with such earlier work as "Two Armies", and that the latter is indeed the more universal, intense and tragic. But earlier in the article Anderson seems to be suggesting that "war poetry" amounts to propaganda: that the ability to recognise the "teleological aspects of death" makes for true war poetry, that it is bourgeois to be "comprehensive rather than combative, more elegaic than propagandist." To make a literary value-judgement is one thing, but to adopt too restrictive a definition of war poetry is to deny the validity of most of Preview's poems about war,

which draw much of their strength from the opposition of personal feeling and necessary action both in war and in society generally. Anderson's poetry in particular thrives on the struggle between the personal, doubtful and tragically complex, and what Shaw calls in his poem "Platitudes of Necessity" ideology's simplicity bred of necessity. The conjunction of the psychological and ideological aspects of war, and the different demands they make on us, produce the disturbing and intriguing "Bombing Berlin" (P 18) and "The Self Is Steep"⁵. In "Montreal" (P 4) these two halves of the poets make-up are characterised as "the frightened boy" uttering "his tedious soliloquy" and "my other hero" who sings "of joy like a tenor".

So while Anderson, as a representative of a new generation of radicals, could echo Christopher Lee's "Trahison des Clercs"⁶ with respect to Auden, Spender, Day Lewis and Isherwood, and ask of Spender "Can this be the same poet who took such an active part in support of the Spanish Government?" (P 7), it behoved him and the rest of the group to avoid the idealistic propagandising, the self-importance and millennial utterances which these poets had cast aside in the forties. There was little room during the war for the thirties prophetic stance that Empson had mocked in 1937 with:

Waiting for the end, boys, waiting for the end.
 What is their to be or do?
 What's become of me or you?
 Are we kind or are we true?
 Sitting two and two, boys, waiting for the end.⁷

Neufville Shaw's "Old Elizabeth and New George" (P 13), also portrays the thirties socialists sardonically, and presents them as waiting for the end in a train of revolution which never pulled out of the station:

From his college window the writer saw a force with which he thought he could ally himself, and, not forgetting his blazer, he ran to join it as if to join the angels. It took him many years and a war to recognize the bitter historic realities of revolution and change. He had not missed the train, but rather, when he climbed aboard found that the damned thing would not pull out of the station. This inefficiency disheartened him, and he went in search of other railroads which, although they didn't lead to Utopia, provided him with an immediate satisfaction.

If one is to take such a condescending view of what these writers did achieve, one has to take care that one's own poetry does not become Utopian, and also that one's revolutionary sentiments are longer-lived and more firmly-based than those of the poets one is criticising. It would have been disheartening for Shaw to know that nine years later Desmond Pacey would be writing in Creative Writing In Canada an epitaph to the Preview Group surprisingly similar to Shaw's own wartime dismissal of the thirties writers⁸, and that by 1957 Patrick Anderson would be making some blasé references to his own political past.⁹ On the other hand, Shaw's Preview poetry is hardly Utopian in its attitudes; like Ruddick, Scott and Page, he did not conceal his doubts and fears, or magnify the extent to which he thought his poetry would be efficacious in the social struggle. Anderson, however, was capable of writing verse every bit as Utopian as the worst excesses of the thirties:

...Would
not everyone like lovers wear the world
and time grown round
be grasped, and globes display the short way home?
("We the People", P 15)

Admitt^d_^ely the difficulties involved in raising a passionate cry of expectation of affirmation in poetry are immense: how is one to avoid shrillness or glibness? Quite naturally the group did not wish to confine itself to the "Platitudes of Necessity" theme of grudging

acceptance of dogma, but wanted to visualise socialism in action. The question then was -- what was Preview's relation to the existing political situation in Canada, and to what vision of society was it dedicated?

The relationship between poetry, politics and the war is examined throughout Preview 11, and is also treated in articles such as Scott's "A Note on Canadian War Poetry" (P 9), and Shaw's "The Maple Leaf Is Dying" (P 17), as well as in the notes to Preview 21, "An Explanatory Issue". It is suggested that the poet has an important part to play in social change, as a "humanist leader of the modern movement" (P 21), and that the study of literature "can probe nearer the roots of our disease." ("War and the Universities", P 11). Shaw claims in "The Maple Leaf is Dying" that the poetry of Anderson, Page and Scott represents "...a didacticism which, while not constituting political directive, is a ruthless analysis of social falsehood." This view of the radical poet as non-doctrinaire, yet expressing through his own searching and honest explorations the need for change, is most explicitly stated in Scott's "Note on Canadian War Poetry": "A live movement in poetry will reflect and often foreshadow the creative movements in its social environment. Poets sensitive to the growing forces of their age will become a potent instrument of social change." (P 9)

What emerges from these various speculations on the social and political role of the poet is the desire of the Preview members to work together to give voice to radical feeling, not as representatives of any specific political group, but as individuals whose honesty leads them to describe and criticise their own society. In "Ourselves", Anderson complains about criticism which praises or damns each new Preview poem "like a new hat", without trying to see it also in terms of the over-

all picture, which would show poets as different as P.K. Page and F.R. Scott as allies, in that they are both expressing the same system of values.

However, it would not be correct to conclude that all Preview poems strike exactly the same political note. Anderson's more affirmative revolutionary poems like "Miners" and "We the People" sound somewhat out of place in Preview not because they are particularly bad poetry, but because the general tone of Preview, like that of Canadian socialism as a whole, is moderate rather than revolutionary. G. Horowitz has used Louis Hartz's method of political analysis, that of studying societies founded by Europeans as "fragments" thrown off from Europe, to suggest in his article on "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada" that:

The socialism of the United States, the socialism of De Leon, Berger, Hillquit and Debs, is predominantly Marxist and doctrinaire, because it is European. The socialism of English Canada, the socialism of Simpson, Woodsworth and Coldwell, is predominantly Protestant, Labourist and Fabian, because it is British¹⁰.

The result, for Preview, was that the Canadian political scene provided somewhat thin air for a revolutionary poetry to breathe, and the communist Canadian poet, like his English counterpart, was apt to be a young man whose attitudes changed as he grew older. There is a remarkable similarity between W.H. Auden's pronouncing "Spain" and "A Communist to Others" "trash, which he is ashamed to have written"¹¹ and Patrick Anderson's cavalier treatment of his sloughed political skin in Search Me.¹² Neufville Shaw remarks now¹³ that he feels ashamed today to recall that the younger members of the Preview Group tended to regard somewhat contemptuously F.R. Scott's description of himself as a "social democrat".

Theoretically, the division within Preview between Marxist and social democrat outlooks ought to have been destructive: Patrick Anderson claims to have been a communist during the war¹⁴, and Neufville Shaw says that both he and Bruce Ruddick were Marxists. This left Scott and Klein, both of whom were associated with the CCF, and P.K. Page, by all accounts, including her own, slightly left of centre¹⁵: the group seems to line up at three a side. In the context of the magazine itself, however, these distinctions become much more blurred. Shaw had claimed that their poetry was "didactic without constituting political directive", and indeed the general Preview position is one of moderate left-wing sympathies. Anderson, the most volatile politically in the pages of the magazine, often restricts his revolutionary self to an admiration of Russia ("I was allowed to bring out a Heroic Red Army Number!"¹⁶), and is held in check by his exploration of the relationship between his self and his political consciousness, which made his verse deal in problems rather than propaganda. While Shaw and Ruddick may have been Marxist, their verse betrays throughout an element of liberal doubt, a conflict over the question of ends and means, a temptation of cynicism, which suggests that their position was far from dogmatic. It is also interesting to note that Anderson set "We the People" and "For a Spanish Comrade", two of his more revolutionary poems, in an international setting rather than a specifically Canadian or British one, perhaps feeling that the Canadian political atmosphere was not capable of providing a proper setting for a vision of the millennium. Though Poem On Canada deals with Canadian history in Marxist terms at some points, it ends with the oft-quoted "Let the Canadian / with glaciers in his hair..."¹⁷ which is a call for a revolution in terms of consciousness rather than an economic

structure. "Miners", another poem with a specific setting, this time Glamorgan, is conceived in trade union and Labour Party terms rather than those of revolutionary communism. The position of the more extreme left-wing members of the group was complicated by the fact that the CCF was, as Horowitz puts it, "...knocking on the gates of political power"¹⁸ from 1942 to 1945, the years of Preview's existence, and hence promising a form of concrete activity which they could hardly hope for from the Labor Progressive Party.

If one examines Preview 11, with its series of related "Civilian Reports" and poems, describing life in wartime Montreal, one is struck by the homogeneity of the political poses adopted by the members, and the similarity of the views put forward to those which were being expressed at this time in the leading articles of The Canadian Forum, which was distinctively Fabian socialist in outlook during the war. As elsewhere in Preview, and as in The Canadian Forum, the World War is associated with the social change which, it is hoped, will appear in Canada with the coming of peace. Because of this inter-connection, the magazine is presented as the literary counterpart to the war itself; not as a propaganda machine for the need to win the war, but as a continual effort to keep awake in people's minds the underlying meaning of what is at stake. And what is at stake is not merely the defeat of an evil system by an unsatisfactory one, but a world-wide struggle against aggression by common people of all nations, which involves "the relationships between Pole and Yugoslav and Australian and Greek" (P 11) and which is a possible precursor of a continuing peacetime struggle in which these same common people will continue to fight for a government which truly expresses their aspirations, and fulfils the promises they fought for in the war itself. From this

point of view the war, terrible as it is, can be regarded with a kind of optimism; thus an insistent theme of the Preview poets is the promise which lies within the horrors of the war, if the opposing forces of Fascism can be overcome. Anderson's "Bombing Berlin" portrays the Allies as being almost unwillingly made to oppose Fascism, and being forced by their own historical destiny to allow the hard sunlight of change into their own house. As for the Fascists:

Their historical role was to play
the poor cramped quarters of their hate
against our looser concourse democracy
and make us suddenly take sides with life
and with the sun,
and with the merciless seasons...

(P 18)

If one looks at The Canadian Forum for August 1942, one finds sentiments in an article by Fergus Glenn extremely close to those expressed in "Bombing Berlin", in Ruddick's poem "Rehabilitation" (P 10) and "The Conqueror" (P 12), P.K. Page's "The Stenographers" (P 5), and indeed poems and articles throughout Preview:

To the common people of this world, victory in this war will be an empty one unless it ensures for them a way of life far different from that which they have known. No other issue could justify such colossal expenditures of blood, toil, sweat and tears. No other aim is capable of fusing democratic effort into a will-to victory ¹⁹ powerful enough to overcome the ruthless fanaticism of our enemies.

The February 1943 Forum Editorial talks in similar terms about "what the ordinary citizens of Canada -- the boys in the fighting forces, their parents and wives" are going to think of a "planless Canada" after the war. These are not isolated examples; they represent a strain that is constantly present in the Forum during World War II. All of the "Civilian Reports" in Preview 11 look beyond the war in their examination

of wartime life, and hope for some kind of political change which will make life in offices, factories, and intellectual and artistic work, more meaningful. Whereas the Forum speaks explicitly of "the exploitation of natural wealth and human labour by a small and powerful class in its own interest" and "the canker of private monopoly gnawing at the vitals of our democracy"²⁰, Shaw writes in prose of the hollow activities of workers' councils, and in poetry of the bizarre contrast between war posters and the workers' attitudes. There was certainly enough complacency present in Canadian business circles to provide both ammunition and target for the Forum and Preview attacks. In 1943, the President of the Bank of Montreal had stated: "if we are to continue in a system of free enterprise, for which we are fighting", it is to private enterprise that we must look for resumption of normal activities."²¹ (*my italics)

The bland assumption that the war was being fought to preserve the Bank of Montreal, and the "we" used to refer to those doing the fighting, naturally provoked retorts like Shaw's "Obituary Without End" (P 6). Speeches like the following, by Mr. John A. Zellers, Vice-President of Remington-Rand, Inc., addressing the Advertising and Sales Club of Toronto in 1943, and reported faithfully by The Globe and Mail, presented a target looming enough for any radical satirist:

I don't believe men are made strong by coddling the unfit. Life is a struggle, it still is the survival of the fit. Anything else is a contradiction of the law of nature in both vegetable and animal kingdoms. The planners of the post-war period think they're going to avoid the booms and the depressions, but they're as inevitable as the tides of the sea, of day and night....I think they're being presumptuous towards the Almighty.²²

The aggressive "toughness" of such attitudes ("Be on your guard. Protect what you have.") represent the more crass type of capitalist conservatism

that the Preview Group were testing against the actual fabric of life in wartime Montreal.

In the same month that Mr. Zellers was addressing the Advertising and Sales Club of Toronto, the Preview Group were producing the February 1943 edition of their magazine, entitled "Some Aspects of the War", with its prose analyses of various civilian activities. A piece by P.K. Page on "Stenographers" forms an interesting counterpart to her various poems on the subject²³, and spells out the life of repetition and petty restrictions which the girls lead: "The washroom had a long row of lavatories, a long row of basins, two chairs and no window. There the girls congregated during their rest period, smoked, combed their hair, ate their cookies and sang. Later there was a rule about singing." (P 11) But she is careful to point out that the girls are passive enough to allow senseless restrictions to continue, and how they lack any real interest in or knowledge about the ultimate reason for their work in this "War Firm": who it helped and why; anything that might give some semblance of sanity to the days with the typewriter and the carbon paper. Her poem "Typists", which accompanies the article, is less analytical and more emotionally sympathetic, and fills out the picture of the way of life ^she is trying to convey:

Crowded together typists touch
softly as ducks and seem to sense
each other's anguish with the swift
sympathy of the deaf and dumb.

Scott, in his report on "War and the Universities" calls for a revolutionary and aware university which will be able to provide some intellectual stimulus to the necessary review of the quality of Canadian society during and after the war.

In "Electrical Plant", Neufville Shaw analyses the nature of life and work in the factory in which he is employed. He describes what he sees as the prevailing mood of apathy, where the only mention of "Nothing Matters Now But Victory" and "What About You?" comes from the posters stuck up on the factory walls, and the pamphlets from the unions which one finds scattered about as a result of the American Federation of Labour's attempt to break into the non-union factory. Quite rare in Preview is the type of labour-analysis which Shaw introduces into his article. He observes that the Company, in view of the apathy of its employees is not at present enough worried by the Union's organizing drive to present an active counter-attack, but that it is sufficiently alert to the long term threat to attempt to improve its standing with the workers through strategems which look attractive without altering the balance of power in any real way. Shaw presents his article in such a way that the activities of the "Workers' Council" are grimly amusing without the need for further comment. This body periodically posts a series of demands and the Company's replies (which are final):

Question: Request that the men with five years' service be granted two weeks' holiday with pay.

Answer: The Company reserves this request for further study.

Question: Request that minutes of the Council's meeting be distributed among its members.

Answer: The Company grants this request.

Shaw's article, though brief, deals interestingly with some fundamental aspects of socialism and social equality, and working class reactions to the war. There can be no doubt where his sympathies lie in these matters, but the little poem "Factory Posters" concludes his contribution on a note not of exhortation, but of sadness at the quality of

life and of propaganda which the factory represents. Shaw's work in Preview 11 focuses, like that of the other members of the group, on a revolution in sensibility which, it is hoped, will accompany political revolution: the call is for a social order which will give meaning to the lives of all those who work within society. The articles express dissatisfaction with the quality of life they find around them: a life of intellectual and manual work which seems disconnected from the social structure in which it is set. They present a gap between daily activity in work, study and art, and the platitudes mouthed by the society at war, which assume that the winning of the war is the only issue at stake: that "Nothing Matters Now But Victory". This is the gap in daily experience which Anderson called a kind of silence:

I heard the silence about pain, the ambiguous human silence,
while Jerusalem rang in the green-silence so great
one could hear the nightingale and then Keats' cough in answer.
("Montreal" P 4)

The "silence about pain" in this poem is both social in the broadest sense: the relation of man to man in society through work, the family, and government, and also a reflection upon the need for these human activities to be articulated in the most intense manner possible, through literature. It is to this end that Preview seems to have been dedicated. It undertook this task, of filling the silence, "singing with social content and criticism", as the first Preview Editorial put it, almost as an act of faith (determined to see clearly and to write as well as possible, as believers in the coming peace and its changes, fully aware that Preview could hardly hope to be the direct instrument of social and cultural change).

CHAPTER IV

THE PREVIEW POETS

The "Statement" at the head of Preview 1 had looked forward to a fusion of the "lyric and the didactic elements in modern verse", but this is not a completely adequate description of what the Preview poets wrote during the war. Not many Preview poems are didactic in the sense of setting out to teach or instruct; what they do have in common is a commitment to social themes, to the subject matter of war and wartime life in Canada. For this reason, the group's poetry is more "social" verse than "didactic". The poems explore rather than instruct: they investigate the meaning of the war for Canadians, the nature of daily life in Montreal, the relationship between personal feelings and political belief, and the interaction of individuals in society. These social themes are explored from the differing perspectives of the various group members in such a way that each poem is likely to enter into an illuminating relationship with others elsewhere in the magazine. Thus the workers in Shaw's "Factory Posters" (P 11) are personified and dissected as Joseph A. in Ruddick's "#25" (P 7); their female counterparts are P.K. Page's "Stenographers" (P 5), and their existence is governed by Scott's "The Barons" (P 13).

The poetry is "social" in that it deals primarily with men and women as they interact with each other within and through society: its institutions, its struggles, the forms of work it offers, its means of communication, its philosophy and attitudes, its culture high and low. There is more than one label for poetry which deals explicitly with this

area of our experience: it is "social verse", "public poetry", or "political poetry". There are critics for whom this genre is suspect; not only Desmond Pacey, for whom a mention of Spain in a poem represents "parlour politics"¹, but also the body of critical opinion represented by Poe and Wilde. The latter claimed that "As long as a thing is useful or necessary to us, it is outside the sphere of art.... To art's subject-matter we should be more or less indifferent."² Even if we reject the notion of "art for art's sake" as unduly restrictive, we must still decide how the Preview poetry stands with relation to an assertion such as Stendhal's, that "any moral intention, that is to say any self-interested intention of the artist's, kills the work of art."³

Commenting on this statement in 1969, Patrick Anderson said: "I still think poetry can be 'political' in the widest sense -- any kind of gush and almost all kinds of didacticism kill it."⁴ The question is an important one in a consideration of verse of the Preview type, and its resolution hinges upon one's interpretation of "self-interested". A poem about society by a socialist is almost sure to contain a "moral intention"; its meaning is still political in what Anderson calls "the widest sense" as long as it does not surrender its own approach to reality for some prefabricated role. The boundaries of "self-interested intention" cannot be strictly defined in the abstract; one must reduce the question to specific critical judgements.

If a poem's or a novel's left-wing attitudes appear to spring honestly from the view of reality it presents, it is no more "self-interested" than a patently bourgeois work of art. Balzac, as analysed by Lukacs⁵, seems to illustrate the way that artistic integrity produces a more effective portrait of society's shortcomings than do mere

attempts at propaganda. Characteristic of good literature is its sincerity, its honesty: one of the supreme human qualities, of necessity to individual happiness and to the well-being of society. If a poem represents a writer's distortion of his sensibility to fit a political pattern, it offends us aesthetically and morally: it offends against the honesty for which we go to a work of art. But when the relation between the work and the system of thought is reciprocal and the work impresses us as a human performance, there can be little reason to reject it under the label of didacticism. We have no more right to reject Brecht because he mixes politics and literature than we have to reject the author of The Cloud of Unknowing for using Christian mysticism as the basis of his work. The argument draws us back to the judgement of individual works.

Unfortunately, Preview was not always proof against the poetic dishonesty which springs from a desire to press home a self-interested moral. Patrick Anderson's poem "Death of an Animal Man" (P 8), for example, is unsuccessful not because it presents the tragedy of violent death in battle, but because it ends by yoking its "humanity" to the "comment" in a facile manner which suggests a manipulation of feeling for its own sake. The last lines of this poem, which conclude the celebration of the joyous senses of an anonymous man -- his breathing, loving, running, dancing, whistling and laughing, read:

the precipice hand
gives back no more the rose as a soft echo
nor does the arm defend the cottage brain
nor shoulders wear the massive past as muslin
for all, all, all
lies now dissected on the battle field.

Because the death in war has no integral significance in the poem -- the man described could have lost his life at any time in any place --

the poem seems to attempt to obtain cheap "significance" from the mere mentioning of the battlefield.

The temptation to propagandise is a form of artistic dishonesty to which the writer of social verse is particularly prone. However, the "manifestoes" and criticism discussed in Chapter III of this study show that the group were concerned with "political poetry" as a genre which could deal with an important area of human experience rather than as propaganda for any particular political system. They had made clear their own left-wing sympathies, but their poetic theory had stressed simplicity, humanity, contemporaneity and emotional vividness. Their remarks on the subject of poetry are those of practising poets; they do not represent an attempt to review literature in political or Marxist terms. Nowhere in Preview does one find that variety of "Marxist" literary analysis which had been responsible for much narrow-minded criticism during the twenties and thirties in attempting to equate revolution with absolute simplicity in literature, dismissing Joyce, Eliot and Cummings⁶, and in Vernon Louis Parrington's Main Currents in American Thought coming to the conclusion that "In his subtle psychological enquiries...[Henry James] remained shut up within his own skull-pan."⁷ This kind of "proletarian simplification" had already been under attack in the thirties from Partisan Review and others⁸, and Preview stressed on four occasions⁹ the importance of the "intellectual frontier", and the need to maintain a standard of literary excellence without any self-conscious lowering of standards. Anderson did make some gestures in the direction of proletarian poetry in The Victory Broadsheet, but there is nothing of this kind in Preview. The magazine was against poetry as propaganda in theory, and in practice its poetry is so far

from being propagandist that one of its problems is its awkwardness in actually embodying its ideals, as opposed to attacking its enemies and presenting complex doubts and difficulties.

The following studies, while arranged so as to examine in detail the Preview poetry of each member of the group, also attempt to show the extent to which the magazine represents a genuine collaboration in the creation of a body of social verse with common themes, subject matter and attitudes.

1. Neufville Shaw and Bruce Ruddick¹⁰

Neufville Shaw and Bruce Ruddick were the two members of the Preview Group who disappeared most abruptly after the war: a piece from each of them appeared in Northern Review, and then they apparently ceased to publish their work. They alone of the regular contributors to the magazine never published a separate volume of their own verse, though they each contributed seventeen pieces of poetry and prose to the magazine whose original appearance they had helped to bring about. Not all the poems they wrote for Preview are successful; certainly they do not seem to justify collection for separate publication, and it is not surprising that they are seldom anthologised. Yet they are not completely devoid of merit in their own right, and in the context of an examination of the verse of the group as a whole they can prove quite fascinating reading, for they share many of the common poetic assumptions of the group: when they are successful, they remind one of the best work of the group, and when they fail they give one an insight into the faults to which Scott, Anderson and Page are also prone.

Neufville Shaw had been a founder-member of the Preview Group,

but his work appeared less frequently in the magazine as time went on: he published in every issue from one to nine, but in only four of the subsequent twelve issues. Shaw's ten Preview poems deal with mainly social, or public, themes. They all draw upon the poet's wartime feelings and experiences, and especially upon his personal and social aspirations and dreams, for their subject-matter. The total impression is of a mind engaged on a quest for inspiration, hope, and some kind of worthwhile stability in the face of a world whose future is in the process of being determined by violent means, and whose external reality is consequently confusing and productive of unease.

An apparently simple poem such as his "Poem" from Preview 1 contains within its sixteen lines many of the preoccupations of the Preview Group. It opens with a picture of peaceful Canadian Lakeside scenery, one which is almost too idyllic, with islands "which surrender never": they seem immune from the dangers of war, attack and siege. Here natural rhythms appear to dominate life in a gentle yet firm discipline, as the "world...spins its rigid dance." But as we respond to these "ineluctable rhythms", our angle of vision is restricted, and "we catch the under bones of / Things." By now a fairly familiar Preview thematic pattern is beginning to emerge: the treatment of Canadian isolation in the wartime world, as a country deeply involved in a war, yet not having the conflict continually forced upon its attention and nerves; living seemingly at several removes from its own immediate reality, the war in Europe. The point is made more explicitly in the final three lines of Shaw's poem, when the description focuses on the ships that ply the lakes. They come from distant lands, and seem to bring communication through trade with the rest of the world, with the violent

breath of their "foreign smokes"; but the impression left by the last line is one of remoteness:

Yet ships bear different flags,
Hose the sky with foreign smokes,
And wink distantly to their neighbours.

Even in the same issue of Preview, number one, this theme occurs in two other poems, receiving differing treatment at the hands of Bruce Ruddick and Patrick Anderson. For them, it assumes all the characteristics of a kind of alienation; Ruddick strikes the posture of an angry prophet denouncing those who appear to have no grasp of the situation which lies beyond their immediate experiences of work and relaxation, who are "dull to the omen":

You -- dull to the omen --
Will trespass in woods
And hunt season's goods
And be dead in autumn,

This unpleasant curse, delivered in "Brother --, You of the City", is directed not only at those who are not prepared to grasp the full implications of the wartime situation, but doubles also as a socialist threat to those who are not aware of their own impending downfall; the poem predicts the disappearance of the "woman with beads", that well-known bourgeois phenomenon whom P.K. Page consigns to the bottom of the ocean in "No Flowers" (P 2). The question is not merely one of being more deeply involved in the carnage in Europe, but of using this violent conflict to the right ends in the Canadian context: the war is constantly associated with the movement towards socialism in Canada. To take an epigraph from P.K. Page, "...winning the war and attaining personal freedom are one and the same thing." ("Stenographers", P 11). Often the

personal freedom, the winning of the war, and the socialization of Canada are grouped together in the Preview poems. When Anderson complains in "Capital Square", his version of the alienation theme in Preview 1, that:

No warmth is here, only an abstract good;
your dead shall never bleed nor your love return;
children ask here no gifts nor the hungry food...

he is indeed being dangerously sentimental, but not as much so as if the war and a qualitatively better society were not identified in the poem and in his thinking.

It is typical of Shaw that his should be the quietest of the poems on this topic in Preview 1, lacking the cultivated brutality of Ruddick, or the technical brilliance of Anderson. "Obituary Without End" (P 6), like "Poem", expresses ideas that one can find elsewhere in Preview, and also in The Canadian Forum, about the need to rid one's view of the war of cant¹¹; it expresses its ideas not through memorable imagery or expression, but through a dogged sincerity which is convincing without being poetically exciting. In this poem Shaw suggests that only some system of thought can make sense of the deaths of so many men in war, and that the present system in Canada does not seem to "organise" the realities of the war: the political world seems half-hearted and clichéd in terms of the tremendous horror of the war. It issues a massive figure of dead and wounded side by side with a platitude: "to protect our way of life, / Our right to criticise the other guy." The quest is for a structure which will make sense of the war and its aftermath.

Dissatisfaction with the atmosphere of day to day life in Montreal, and with the Canadian social system, is a major theme in Shaw's poetry.

It bursts forth from "Obituary Without End"; it is also present in "Novella" (P 6), a poem on Spain which speaks of "...those who wait / and watch...", and in "Factory Posters", the poetic counterpart of his "Civilian Report" on a factory in Preview 11. The figures on the poster are living out a split-second of intense life in battle, while the workers wander home "To the cracked and barren tables of their love." Even the "Drowned Sailor" (P 2) is seen in terms of frustration, in his motionless inability to reach up towards the ships sailing over him.

Frustration is not a surprising theme to find in the work of a young radical writer, but as one reads through Shaw's poems one becomes increasingly aware that the exploration of frustration, doubt, and compromise is not balanced by a positive presentation of alternatives, either in terms of general aims or specific suggestions. The drowned man gropes for the ship, but will never reach it; the workers are supremely apathetic; the heroes of the Spanish war are dead; in "Platitudes of Necessity" there is a grudging acceptance of dogma. Even as a negative critique of a society, these poems lack direction. Is there a precise connection between the workers' apathy and the nature of the factory posters, or does the poem revolve around a neat visual contrast? "Factory Posters" does not answer this question.

This lack of positive direction is discernible too in the rhythms and structure of the poetry. The supposedly hopeful "At Cities That Know Our Plans" (P 4) has virtually no sense of movement at all, despite its attempt to portray a "tortured road" to fulfillment. It consists of a series of three or four line units, each describing some activity of war or of civilian life; each section relying heavily on adjectives for its effectiveness. In the first seventeen lines there are twenty-eight

adjectives: there is hardly an unqualified noun in the entire poem. The result is a hesitant, wandering and indecisive rhythm, which adds to the confusion of the poem as a whole until it is almost impossible to understand where the poem is leading. The absence of transitive verbs and the emphasis on novel adjectives is a mannerism which Shaw seems to have taken over from Anderson. Unfortunately, lacking Anderson's inventiveness and skill with irony, he allows it to descend to the level of static verbal display. In the case of "Harbour" (P 3), the desire to produce bizarre epithets results in what are perhaps the most unfortunate three lines of poetry published in Preview: "Then ships, / All hazed with frantic love, / Edge into hopeful havens..."

"Obituary Without End", while it seems to be calling for a more vital politics, seems wary of systems of all kinds when it remarks sardonically that "Systems, they say, are so important.", and Shaw makes a doubtful revolutionary in "Platitudes of Necessity". To some extent, these attitudes are a valid subject-matter for poetry, but it is in the verse of Anderson rather than of Shaw that they are treated with a subtlety and verve which makes them fascinating.

In some ways, however Shaw's low-keyed expression of political frustration represented the group's feelings about the Canadian situation. In his book Canada Today, written in 1938, F.R. Scott had presented a very similar picture of the Canadian political atmosphere, and claimed that his views corresponded with those of large numbers of Canadians. He had been particularly scathing about the alternatives provided by the choice between the Liberals and the Conservatives:

Whichever side succeeds, it is well known that the country will be governed in much the same way. Canadian statesmen stand in fear of great movements of opinion, and seek to lull them rather than to encourage them and

bring them to fruition. They fear that the unity of the Dominion will be endangered if vital questions are raised....The result is that Liberals and Conservatives differ very little in their opinions upon crucial questions, since they are both made up of the same varied elements.¹²

Scott summed up the Canadian political situation as he saw it in 1938 as follows: "Between the laissez-faire Dominion government on the right, and the scattered forces of the political left, is a wide area of dissatisfied citizens not knowing where to turn. A sense of directions is wanted, and none can predict whence it will come."¹³ The claim of "Obituary Without End" is that the citizens, lacking this sense of direction, clutched at the system nearest to them and hung on to it. In fact, the newer system of the CCF, more in accord with the desires of Scott and Shaw, was reaching new heights of popularity during the war years; but the 1945 election was to bear out Shaw's prediction, once Mackenzie-King had ventured far enough out of line to, in his own words, "cut the ground in large part from under the CCF."¹⁴

The conclusion of "Platitudes of Necessity" repeats the message of "Obituary Without End": that we need a system to work our wills collectively; it is unlikely that such a system will be perfect, but it is not possible to live in a world of liberal quibbling and consolation; but we must keep ourselves humane. For Shaw, revolutionary thinking involves a compromise between what one wants for one's society and the simplification of emotion which dogma demands. In "Novella" (P 6), he speaks of deaths in the Spanish war as "These bitter things that bear tomorrows", and that line might stand as an epigraph for the themes of his Preview poems.

Of the work of the other group members, the poetry and prose of Bruce Ruddick most resembles that of Neufville Shaw. Some of this resem-

blance is due to the fact that they were the least well-known of the regular contributors, and their published work is to be found almost exclusively in Preview. This means that one's impression of the work of them both is founded on their Preview production, and for this reason it is hard to see them as anything other than Preview writers, whereas one knows the F.R. Scott of The McGill Fortnightly Review and Trouvailles, the Anderson of The Colour as Naked and Search Me, and the P.K. Page of The Metal and the Flower and Cry Ararat!

However, there is more than a historical similarity between the work of Ruddick and Shaw; from the point of view of subject matter their work can be seen to fit together rather neatly, dealing as consistently as it does with the war and Canadian attitudes towards it. Shaw deals with the need for, and dangers of, dogma, and with the apathy prevalent among many of those with whom he came into contact: writers, painters and workers. Ruddick was being trained in medicine during the war (he is now a practising psychiatrist in New York), and as Shaw's work often revolves around his experiences inside factories (as in "At the Plant" (P 1), "Factory Posters" (P 11), "Electrical Plant" (P 11), and "Boy 1942" (P 9), so Ruddick's is centred upon his medical experiences. He draws upon the insight into Montreal life that work in a hospital provides, the veneer of cynicism it tends to produce in himself and those around him, and the consequent desire for some genuine community or spontaneous act of love. The style is terse, the pose cynical and tough. The opening of "25" (P 7) is typical. The grim punning of "heart...in hand", and the mixture of awe and disgust in the description represent a typical Ruddick stance; the unpleasant toughness is not the only ingredient in the poem, however. The catalogue of organs moves into a list of the

number of calories used daily for various purposes, presented with conspicuous absence of comment.

Since the labourer has been a "muscle machine", there is something appalling about the pathology, since it seems to reveal everything about him. Ruddick searches, like the early anatomists, for the soul: something to make sense of the mechanisms, and the old age which "crept like a vine within the skull." For a poet involved daily in impersonal suffering of this kind, the idea of the war's brutality is appallingly real, and the "pity" of Wilfred Owen an inadequate reaction to the century's second World War. Ruddick's approach to the war is one which dares both himself and his readers with its artificial cynicism. He tempts fate, conjures up the worst, and presents bitter little descriptive pieces that are intended to provoke the reader into the desired response.

It was suggested in Chapter II that one of the group's most basic ideas was its association of the war in Europe with social change at home. In fighting Fascism, Canadian society had been made to stop and re-examine itself. The hope was that the returning soldiers, and their families, would not be willing to entrust the post-war world to capitalism; that they would see more clearly inequality in opportunity and in the distribution of wealth in the country for which they had been fighting.

But what if, after the war, the whole impetus towards social change were to run down or prove an illusion; what if radical changes simply did not occur, if the soldier returned to a situation similar to that which he had had to face in 1918? Ruddick toys with this idea, where the war becomes banal, and the post-war world a readjustment to

cynical "eternal verities", in a number of poems. In "Plaque" (P4), "Rehabilitation" (P 10) and "The Conqueror" (P 12) the cynical tone sounds like an exorcism for such fears. Something like the opening of Shaw's "Obituary Without End", they present the war and its imagined aftermath "objectively", so that idealistic hopes seem absurd.

Both "Rehabilitation" and "The Conqueror" deal with the aftermath of the war. The millennium of "Bombing Berlin" turns in these poems into its opposite: nothing has changed. It is in this sense that the poems are an exorcism. We know from "Fever" (P 16), "Scenario" (P 9) and "August 1942" (P 6) that Ruddick shared many of Anderson's hopes for socialism in Canada. But the perils of the attitude where one awaits the revolution to come are obvious: one easily becomes a prey to self-doubt, both on the level of one's own judgement in expecting some form of important change, and on that of one's efficacy in bringing it about. "Rehabilitation" is an attempt to exercise such doubts by setting them down with a highly self-conscious cynicism. Here Ruddick envisages a post-war world in which the lessons and hopes of the war are frittered away, left to military historians or condensed into dates to be learned by schoolchildren, where the hidden profits of capitalism will feel secure, and "stand majestically on mountainsides", and "Some hallowe'en the medals / will get lost by some bell-ringing grandson." Most tragically, all the suffering will seem to have been in vain; not being built into the world in the enduring form of new institutions or attitudes, it is relegated to something that takes place on faded paper:

And hidden in library files,
in the fading rotogravures-
a boy sits in rubble plating
with lathing and bricks-
a fat man in tears watches

a meagre ceremonial-
 a peasant woman slumps to her knees
 hopeless hands upturned
 on the beaten wheat.

"The Conqueror" is in a similar vein, and its title ironic. The returning soldier is almost nostalgic for the war and its purposefulness when he is back home, throwing his door-knob memento from Berlin at the rats in his house, fitting himself back into the old life: "Later, hounds the streets, his old inherited stand, / loved by the world like a whore with varicose legs."

These poems suggest the writer's hopes by presenting what he fears. Ruddick is only slightly more successful than Shaw in having his poetry present directly the characteristics of the society which would embody his ideals. "August 1942" is a Shaw-like quest for some meaning with which to invest the wartime world. Like "Obituary Without End", it brings up and rejects the natural world as a source of consolation. For Ruddick as for Shaw the comforting reflections on natural cycles are not enough. The "race-histories" of the eggs and fry in the lake, and the fecund-seeming summer evening away from the city, under stars which link up himself and the natural life around him, are suddenly far from comforting. They suggest quantity rather than quality: a blind repopulation of the world which makes the slaughter of the twentieth century wars seem "natural". He rejects fertility: the world is "fevered with pregnancies.", but to what human end?

The perennial world reels, fevered with pregnancies.
 Surely my annual brothers serve more than hoe and spanner,
 Save more than tunneled, chambered, hard-backed vaults.

"Surely..." The cry is familiar, from Shaw, Scott and Anderson.

In as far as what is rejected here is obviously a lifeless and deep-rooted capitalism that has an adverse effect on the quality of life, this poem is political and socialist. But it is not economic in intent; it does not set out primarily to say that the vaults hide money that should be re-distributed. It does claim that the war is a struggle against the mindless and the inhumane that has to be a revolt also against a moribund culture in order to make sense.

If Shaw's major poetic defect was a structural aimlessness, and a technique made diffuse by the use of too many contrived adjectives, Ruddick's are in some ways the opposite: his dependence on a tough, stark diction, and his tendency to elaborate what is usually a simple thematic statement until the frantic serious signalling verges on the ludicrous. Since his excesses often occur in the context of an attack on the defects of capitalist society, they represent another obstacle to the writing of social verse, along with the kind of falsification mentioned earlier in this chapter, in connection with Anderson's "Death of an Animal Man". It is dangerous for the social poet to belabour the reader with information designed to produce the desired effect; it is the equivalent in this genre of the lyric and personal poet's excess of personal emotion.

Ruddick's "Scenario" (P 9), for example, is a picture of a decaying and disgusting city, which the poet tirelessly elaborates:

A spent frayed world surveys
its navel and explores
its hot dry nose.

.

the sthenic pinkly lolls
waiting the calcified artery
and the melancholic scrag
stares at the transom.

Having portrayed the city in a large number of depressing images, he moves on quickly to a Prufrock-like self-deprecation: "Shall I sit smiling genially in the sun / feeding pigeons and appraising legs?". He then decides to drive home the point with a final three lines which bring the poem to a suspiciously parody-like full stop:

Poorer than muttering monk
are those whose pin-striped gods
parade in limousines.

Nothing enlightening or surprising has been said; on the contrary, the accumulation of various styles and details leave the impression of something banal being said too loudly. Radical feeling of itself does not make a poem a success, any more than it destroys it. "#25", "The Conqueror", "Rehabilitation" and "Plaque" use this tough stance and accumulation of detail much more successfully because they are essentially ironic, and the irony prevents the detail from becoming tedious. If Joseph A. in "#25" were merely an object of derision, like the city in "Scenario" or the recipients of abuse in "Brother- You of the City", the poem would be merely unpleasant. As it is, the undertones of compassion and anger make the description of the dissection perhaps the most effective of Shaw's Preview verse.

The last poem by Ruddick to be examined here is even less of a success than "Scenario", though it fails for different reasons. "Fear" (P 19) is interesting mainly because it reveals the dangers of needless obscurity in poetry: not the obscurity of a large and important theme bursting the seams of the language, but the less acceptable variety which is produced of a cipher-like presentation of a banal message. "Fear", shows the less talented Ruddick attempting a similar type of complexity

stylistically, possibly under the influence of the leader of the Preview Group, without justifying it thematically. The first two stanzas read:

Buried O easily in hint
to the sole, and the hand
told by a rosy threat,
in eyelid quick to a blast
or, passive to a penny
when pain's ultimate sends
death to the burning nerve
and fear goes.
These are accomodated,
the easy, and the final fall.

But elsewhere, in planes of living,
sudden and unnamed
it trapezes in brain,
somersaults through the blood,
and is sick in the coiling gut
or, malignantly,
booms to the eyes of love
or turns like a worm in the throat.

This is in many ways typical of the less attractive aspects of the Preview poetry. First, the distortion of normal syntax has become a mannerism. Secondly, the poem seems concerned to flaunt the poet's cleverness at the reader: the hint to the soul before death is punningly a "hint / to the sole", but why is this relevant on both levels to the meaning of the sentence? Similarly, "passive to a penny" is a neatly alliterative way of presenting indifference to things which were formerly interesting, but is the penny a meaningful symbol at this point, or is it merely convenient for the alliteration?

In short, the first stanza seems to go a long way about to say that one escapes fear by dying. A reader unprepared for such playful dalliance, the common reader whom Preview 21 had hoped to involve in poetry, might be justifiably impatient with Mr. Ruddick's extravagance. Even if he had read Ruddick's comments on his own work in the "Explanatory

Issue" of September 1944, he might not be convinced that the practice in "Fear" lives up to the theory. Ruddick explains there that his poetry "seems obscure mainly because it attempts to say a lot by giving a specific picture which implies significant generalisations.", but "Fear" is not obscure in that sense; it works in the opposite way, seeming obscure through providing a superfluity of pictures. In the second stanza, fear trapezes, somersaults, vomits, booms and turns in successive lines; before the end of the poem it has succeeded in clipping, curling, stammering, staying, marring, miracling, stirring, spelling and making crones of angels. Few poems could support such a persistent emphasis on a single phenomenon, and this poem has not sufficient intellectual backbone to emerge successful; it ends as a rather tedious descriptive piece, for all the violence of its imagery and the stabbing of its rhythms in sympathy with the mood it hopes to convey.

It is, however, typical of a large number of Preview poems in its complex syntax, its search for arresting images, and the intensity of its tone. Anderson and Page are more successful with this neo-metaphysical style than Ruddick and Shaw because they achieve a fusion of subject matter, tone, form and imagery capable of completing their poems. By this I mean that it is difficult to select a single poem by either Ruddick or Shaw which is an unqualified success: some will start well, and then lose direction; others, like "Fear" and "For A.H.", fall under the weight of their own obscurity; some, like "Rehabilitation" and "Drowned Sailor", are moving but rather predictable; "At Cities That Know Our Plans" and "Obituary Without End" are loosely structured.

Nevertheless, their work in Preview is not completely overshadowed by that of their three more illustrious collaborators. A little magazine

does not print a succession of masterpieces, unless it is extremely fortunate. The twenty-four poems by Ruddick and ^{Shaw} Scott work alongside those of Anderson, Scott and P.K. Page to present the attitudes and insights of the magazine. Poems like "#25", "Fever", "The Conqueror", "Novella" and "Platitudes of Necessity", which examine the meaning both of the war and of the concept of social revolution, deal with the avowed subject-matter of the magazine, raise questions important to the group's beliefs, and attempt answers from their own angle of perception and in their own manner.

2. Patrick Anderson

Patrick Anderson is perhaps the most fascinating member of the Preview Group, and his work and personality had a profound effect on the other members, and on the magazine itself. He published more poems and articles in Preview than anyone else: fifty-six, as opposed to Klein's eight, Scott's eighteen, P.K. Page's thirty-three, and seventeen each by Ruddick and Shaw. Though F.R. Scott was fifteen years his senior, and the more established poet, Anderson seems to have taken control of the group from the start, writing most of the editorials, getting the magazine duplicated, and arranging group meetings. His delight in playing the part of the poet, the orator and the leader was one of the things P.K. Page recalled in her interview with Dorothy Livesay in 1968: "Patrick liked disciples, and liked to be a centre, and it would have been difficult for him to play the role necessary in a merger [with First Statement] Patrick loved the role of poet. He adored it."

This aspect of Anderson's character is present too in his poetry, as will be seen later, in an examination of the way his poems often

attempt a form of emotional coercion, conspiring to direct the reader into the desired emotional state. Anderson himself seems to have been aware of this aspect of his personality, confessing in the first section of "The Self Is Steep" (in A Tent for April) that "Between these passionate acts I do not live- / shaping before me the declarant one, the orator..."

As the leader of the Preview Group, Anderson was at the centre of four years' exciting poetic activity, and from 1942 to 1949 his reputation as a poet was at its highest point. He published in Poetry (Chicago), The Canadian Forum, Voices, First Statement, and A.J.M. Smith's Book of Canadian Poetry, as well as in Preview and Northern Review. A Tent for April and The White Centre came out in quick succession in 1945 and 1946 respectively. The 1946 volume was particularly well-received; but the collapse in Anderson's reputation between 1949 and the present is so pronounced as to demand some explanation, since it does not seem to be justified simply in terms of the quality of the poetry.

Jessica Nelson North's review of The White Centre in Poetry (Chicago)¹⁵ praised Anderson's metaphorical vividness and arresting technique, as well as his original treatment of the Canadian winter scene. A.J.M. Smith's review of the same volume in The Canadian Forum is almost adulatory, and Dorothy Livesay's comments there on A Tent for April had also been complimentary.¹⁶ In 1949 John Sutherland wrote on "The Poetry of Patrick Anderson" in Northern Review;¹⁷ this is still the best critical study of Anderson. It is also, except for Northrop Frye's brief comments on The Colour as Naked¹⁸, the last complimentary critical review of Anderson's poetry to be published in Canada.

Something happened to Anderson's reputation between 1949 and the

present; or to be more precise, several things happened to affect the reception of his poetry in Canada. Firstly, he was no longer here when The Colour as Naked appeared, so even though most of the poems in it were written here, it did not get the attention it deserved; certainly most writers on Anderson in the fifties and sixties treat his work as though it ended with The White Centre. Secondly, his departure in 1949 made him appear a rather mysterious figure who had appeared in Canada at the start of the war, taken a leading part in a most exciting decade of poetry and magazine production in Montreal, been married and divorced, and suddenly left for Singapore. The result seems to have been that critics feel free to type-cast him: in reviews of Canadian literature and studies of the forties he takes the stage as a pompous pseudo-Marxist who wrote only one kind of poem.

Desmond Pacey quotes the less sensible of his Preview editorials to convey this impression, and gives the Preview social poems a very cursory analysis which does much less than justice to their complexity.¹⁹ For Milton Wilson, Anderson is "a tea-drinking Dylan Thomas"²⁰; he quotes the skiing passage from "Winter in Montreal" (P 21), which Wynne Francis too battens on to in disapproval, attacking his "winter landscape" as if he wrote of nothing else: it is "oppressive...white...anaesthetic." He talks too of Anderson's "Marxism...his self-conscious Canadianism", using Marxism as a term of abuse, and seeming to claim that these are the only ingredients in an Anderson poem. The "Canadianism" taunt seems wholly off the mark; "self-conscious non-Canadianism" would have been more appropriate, since it suggests the honesty with which Anderson accepts his non-Canadian sensibility, and applies it to Montreal and to the Canadian scene generally. In "Poem on Canada" he sees himself as the

interpreter, the immigrant, close enough to Canada to observe it, and detached enough to see it as a unique land still in the process of being "humanized", rather than a factual "my country". His affection for Montreal is understandable: "There was so much to write about, so much that had never been written about before; one couldn't dislike a city which gave one so much, and which one had the sense of recreating."²¹

But in Wilson's article the myth has started to harden: Anderson is an anaesthetic white Marxist. From this portrait, who could imagine the variety of his work for Preview, or recognise him as the author of the bitter, hot, little poem "Desert":

It's not that there's so much of it, he said,
nor the bitter heat nor its blinding glare
but it's the shiftlessness, that there's no purpose here,
nothing but a blanket warming a blanket, or a sum
multiplying and dividing itself forever, a sum
adding and subtracting itself for ever and ever.
(A Tent for April, 23)

Wynne Francis, the last critic to deal with Anderson at any length, in her "Montreal Poets of the Forties", comes no nearer to giving Anderson the credit he deserves. This is due in part to her presentation of the "battle" between First Statement and Preview, discussed in Chapter II of this study. The inaccurate presentation of Preview as a bourgeois publication led to Anderson being set up as the "loser" in this poetic battle; he was an exploiter of the Canadian landscape, says Wynne Francis: "Exploited is the word. His Montreal Mountain is a political symbol; snow is our chloroform and ice our state of social anaesthesia; skiers are capitalist entrepreneurs, or sometimes leftist propagandists."²²

The sole example of Anderson's work is again "Winter in Montreal"! Anderson might be forgiven for wondering whether anyone had read beyond

page twenty-four of The White Centre. Also, the use of the term "exploitation" begs a great many questions about the use of symbols by a social poet. Anderson nowhere claims to be a descriptive poet; what he does attempt in Preview is the use of scenery and everyday actions to represent mental or social states. The depressing rooms in "Portrait" (P 1) and "The Self Is Steep" (in A Tent for April) symbolize their occupants' state of mind: the poems are not descriptive pieces on interior decoration.

But poets can survive classification, even misrepresentation, if they are read and appreciated by a reasonable number of people; and after pointing to the difficulty of obtaining copies of Anderson volumes, and the poor state of criticism, and to Anderson's departure from Canada, one must finally admit that there are qualities in the poetry itself which have left it washed up on the bank of the Canadian poetic tradition while the stream flowed on. The poetry is certainly most un-American, but it differs from anything published in England this century both in its choice of subject-matter, (which seems Canadian), and in the peculiar isolated intensity of the tone, which manages somehow to convey also a faintly amused sense of irony at the frenzied attempt to communicate. It stands out in a Canadian anthology through its wordiness, its density of metaphor, and its debt to Dylan Thomas. But it is Dylan Thomas with a taste of irony; a taste, in fact of T.S. Eliot.

T.S. Eliot, but not Pound. Perhaps here we can find some of the reasons at least for Anderson's decline in popularity in the fifties and sixties. It would not be too adventurous to claim that Imagism, along with several American poets directly or indirectly influenced by Pound, such as Cummings and Williams, has exerted a tremendous influence on

Canadian poetry in the last twenty years: on Souster, Dorothy Livesay, the later F.R. Scott, the P.K. Page of Cry Ararat!, Bowering, Kearns, the newer poets from the West. If one compares a poem about moonlight on a lake by W.W.E. Ross, a poet in whom there is now something of a resurgence in interest, with Anderson's "Wild Duck", one gets a sense of the latter's essential difference from the Imagist tradition:

How magical
is still water
under the moon
when the moon is full,
her pale image
with some stars too
reflected from
the mirror surface²³

Each line here adds to the overall scene by presenting a different image. The pause at the end of each short line slows down our normal sentence and breath control to achieve a sensation of quiet and held-breath suspense. Now Anderson's lake:

Duck that from lightslashed pool went whirring
as anchored toy to acrobat, being shot
tumbled in air, fell feathers in a weight,
was plump and plumage, coloured beyond caring.
(The White Centre, 49)

One could not have a more complete contrast. The poet is everywhere, directing the reader. He has distorted the syntax so that we begin the poem with "Duck", and the rest of the stanza is a qualification of the bird. The main verb, when we finally come across it, is a weak "was". Alliteration is thrust at one with virtuosity, and in the case of "coloured beyond caring", with little regard for sense. One is arrested by the coinage "lightslashed" and the tortuous simile of "anchored toy to acrobat". Anderson is not prepared to give the reader an object in

the Imagist manner: he prefers to process it, and give it the stamp of his own personality. His antithesis to the Imagists not only separates him from the laconics of Souster, and the cultivated directness of Layton, but is in complete contrast also to the low-keyed musings of the younger Margaret Atwood, whose poetry is not itself Imagist, but which does have that air of inviting the reader to fill out its spareness and complete its suggestions, which one associates with that tradition. Besides it, Anderson's poems seem tyrannical: each image's effect has been calculated, and each image or adjective is startling enough to direct the reader in to the desired response. This is a far cry from Pound's vision of "an austere, direct, poetry", and from most Canadian poetry of the fifties and sixties.

It was with this highly individual and Romantic style that Anderson approached the subject-matter to which Preview was dedicated. The result was an intriguing combination of the personal with the social and political. He wrote of "Winter in Montreal": "In this poem I have tried to express a social statement about Canada in terms that allow my essentially emotional and romantic nature free play." (P 21) Using this statement as a yardstick, one can distinguish three main types of poem by Anderson in Preview. The first type exercises his descriptive, "emotional and romantic" tendencies. "Children" (P 23), for example, is an attempt to portray the essential remoteness of childhood from the adult world, and "The Stove" (P 19) attempts to evoke the comforting, creaking presence of the "Quebec heater".

The second category comprises the poems which combine emotion and social statement in the form of exhortation: his unambiguously revolutionary verse in Preview urges the people to grasp their historical

destiny and victory in the war in one struggle. "We the People" (P 15) is of this type, as are "For a Spanish Comrad" (P 11), "Miners" (P 14), and "Soldier" (P 11).

The third type is that which holds the "emotional and romantic nature" in a productive tension against more intellectual considerations. In "Montreal" (P 4), "Winter in Montreal" (P 21), "Summer's Joe" (P 2) and "Statues" (P 22) the tension is between the personal and the political; in "The Self Is Steep" (A Tent for April), "Love Poem" (P 9), "Bombing Berlin" (P 18) and "Portrait" (P 1) the psychological theme leads into questions of historical importance. The later volume The Colour as Naked is full of such verse, where the meaning is not diffuse or tacked on arbitrarily, but welded to the emotional content: "Houses Burning: Quebec" balances the physical fascination of fire with its revolutionary and slum-cleansing implications; "Leaving Canada" measures feelings of achievement against concrete memories of Montreal; "Eden Town" contrasts the sense of belonging to a city, and wanting to change it, to the isolation of bringing a new mentality into it.

Of these three types of poem, the exhortatory kind was the one Anderson abandoned soonest after the war, and the one that sounds least convincing today. "Miners" was one of the twenty-seven of the forty poems Anderson first published in Preview that he never collected into any of his books; in fact, he republished none of his purely exhortatory poems. "Miners" is not a disastrous failure, but the sentiments in the last lines move from the description of Welsh mining life to the world of abstract plans:

Yet now the derricks race
upon Glamorgan's hills
and the wheel of our heads

draw up the loaded veins
 of once blind power
 and dredge for the long dark
 and waiting monuments
 of the people's dead:
 firing these histories, we forge
 from shadows weapons.

The miners' struggle suddenly becomes "ours", and the extended conceit which joins mental activity to the miners' work is somewhat strained. With the abstract concepts of "the people's dead" and "these histories" the immediacy of the identification with the miners seems to dissolve, and there is more hope than certainty in the last line.

One reason why these poems are not entirely successful in the Preview context is that they appear to be addressing the magazine's audience as if it were the massed proletariat. Furthermore, one's faith in such unambiguous identification with the proletarian revolution is shaken by the number of poems by Anderson which examine revolution and its implications in a more complex, less confident, more bourgeois manner. Ten issues before the appearance of "Miners", Preview 4 had published Anderson's "Montreal", which provides a clear example of his more individual approach to the idea of violent change in society.

Whereas "Soldier" and "We the People" addressed themselves to the proletariat and attempted to embody its ideals, "Montreal" seems to be aimed at a middle-class audience: it speaks of the bourgeois revolutionary's anxieties. One has only to read it alongside Brecht's "A Worker Reads History"²⁴ to sense the difference between socialist verse aimed at the middle class and that aimed at the workers. Not only is the extreme simplicity of Brecht in contrast to Anderson's complexity of idea and expression; while both poems are "about" cities, and the need for a just and genuinely creative society, Brecht's is about the relation

of the mass of people to this ideal, while Anderson's turns out to be largely about himself.

"Montreal" is thus a Romantic poem in the sense of being concerned to a large extent with the personality of the poet, as well as in that of looking forward with inspiration and hope to a new age. The poem develops out of the relationship between Anderson's own personality and its problems, and the "cultural silence" of the city he experiences in his perambulations. The silence is "cultural" in the wider sense of the whole texture of life in the society. However, this phenomenon is examined by the two personalities of the poet: "on my stage the frightened boy uttered his tedious soliloquy / while my other hero sang of joy like a tenor." The concept of the "split personality" dominates the poem, dividing it into two sections: firstly, the social scene as seen by "the frightened boy", that pessimistic and alienated half of the poet; and secondly, a brief chorus to close, from the "tenor hero". The poem is split down the middle: on the one hand the "silence about pain, the ambiguous human silence," and on the other a silence full of potential:

a different silence, wired for sound,
for artists' variations on the workers' steady chorus,
when the heart adjusts the lovers show listening love,
and the trumpets are long ears in the people's armies.

Thus the poem ends: on a note of triumph. But the work as a whole is not triumphant, but riddled with ambiguity. The question is not simply one of the present state of alienation being balanced by the half of the poem which represents the revolutionary future. The ambiguity is more personal than that, involving Anderson's intellectual commitment to revolutionary socialism and his bourgeois, Oxford-educated, equivocating sensibility, which is ready to see socialist belief in terms

of personal discontent, and original sin instead of rectifiable injustice.

John Sutherland pointed out the significance of the title of Anderson's second volume of poems, in his article "The Poetry of Patrick Anderson" in Northern Review. He suggested that the stillness of that "white centre" was both a personal and political motif in Anderson's poetry, standing in "Poem on Canada", "Winter in Montreal" and "The Statues" for both personal poise and stability, and the capitalist system brought to an illusory and frigid "perfection" before its collapse and extinction.²⁵ If one follows up Sutherland's suggestion, one finds that questions of personality and of social change are often treated side by side in these poems.

The white centre of stillness in "Winter in Montreal" is suggested by the snow and cold of December and January, and the atmosphere of winter itself. Speaking of this poem in Preview 21, Anderson said:

Winter possesses for me several powerful symbolisms: I see it as a sort of embodiment of the inner life: it brings a mysterious peace and beauty, a suspension of ordinary habits -- the storm windows are shut, the war-traffic is banished from the river, skiers go up to the mountains to practise their secret and dangerous idylls. But this equilibrium, this cult of skiing or Christmas, is really illusory. It is full too of a lonely violence. And in the violence of winter one cannot help thinking of how a real change might develop from the temporary, but still beautiful change brought upon the world by ice and snow. Or, in terms of the inner life, from the frustrations and excitements of a romantic consciousness. I have written a number of poems on similar themes, some deriding the snow as false peace and simplification, others celebrating it and the sports that go with it as a prefiguration of social change.

But he does not give the full meaning of the poem in this last alternative. The fact is that winter here is both false peace and prefiguration of social change. Like many Anderson poems, "Winter in Montreal" changes direction several times. In some senses the cold is attractive, and he derives pleasure from describing "a wonderful crystal / chandelier

that had grown from the roof in the night, / a theatrical piece of ice," and other growths of ice with a seeming life of their own. The cool clarity of the winter air gives a new vision of the city, schematic and accurate: "And, climbing the Mountain, I saw in a bird's eye view / the city below with its way of a photograph." It is this clarity which seems to throw into relief the "Revolutionary future":

But I moralise
on the riotous quiet that makes the colony:
those who live in the capitalist's crystal
surge like revolutionary future about me.

The winter is, from this point of view, the "embodiment of the inner life", and a time to grasp the significance of events. But the poem makes it clear that the skiers are isolated, lost, living in a state of advanced capitalism which keeps them gripped in crystal. Like the snow and cold, this system keeps the people introverted; the pun on the Winter Palace thus symbolises both political stagnation and personal alienation:

O when shall we be free of the winter palace?

.

In the routine of snow and the dreaming season
I hear the avalanche fall from the villa roof
like the plush of a crash in sleeps debility
or Berlin dying, the gloved and female gash
of a great wound gliding into a soldier's body-
a crumpled thunder and faintness so far away...

The theme of the remoteness of the war here links up with Shaw's "Poem" (P 1) and Ruddick's "August 1942" (P 6), discussed at the start of section one of this chapter. The poem has however been attacked, and probably rightly so, by Wynne Francis and Milton Wilson, for its attempt to make one symbol mean two opposite things. Yet this poem is brightly,

wittily attractive in its descriptions and its analogies, and perhaps less contradictory than it seems. The world of ice, with its isolated, inward-looking atmosphere is attractive both in terms of the inner life and of politics. The skier and the skater have style and poise, which the poet desires, but their inwardness is symbolic of a "doomed" system, and thus to be condemned. But the thought of revolution, "February", is more emotionally disturbing than the illusory peace: it requires the "tenor hero" of "Montreal", whereas the "frightened boy" persona of that poem had found a sense of peace in winter, where the "human silence" seemed natural rather than tragic. At one point in "Winter in Montreal", the thought of the melting of the snow, and the end of a society, seems as sinister as the illusory peace itself:

what comes with a limping stride is February

and on my pane a prism burns in the fern
the frost has made, a wind begins to gnaw
at an ivory tower as if it had found a bone.

The ivory tower here is Anderson's own preference for theory, for a breathing space in which to come to terms with himself: he admits that he is as immersed in his own inner life as everyone else: "...the listener does not stir nor the skier wake / nor I, nor I."

The idea of stillness is attractive in other poems: the poignant picture of an Indian-populated Canada unseen by Europeans, in Section One of "Poem on Canada"; the silent, stolen moments of "An Apple Before Bedtime" in The Colour as Naked; and perhaps most importantly, the stillness of "The Statues" (P 22). Like the lovers on Keats' urn, these stone figures "stand forever with advancing step." In previous Anderson poems, statues had been used to symbolise sterile government ("Capital Square"),

and their movement to suggest social change ("Bombing Berlin", where "in our great antiseptic halls / statues stepped down,"). But in "Statues", in the penultimate Preview, the figures have acquired a degree of attractiveness. Like the winter scenes in "Snow and Sleep" (in The White Centre) and "Winter in Montreal", they represent a "white centre" of stillness: twice in the poem they are compared to snowfall.

The question Anderson asks here is whether the purity of classical art, corresponding to a calm and satisfied personality, is incompatible with the realities of exploitation, injustice and the class struggle. "Snow and Sleep" and "Winter in Montreal" had made it clear that, whatever its attractions, peace under these circumstances is illusory. In "Statues", the later poem, the issue is not so clear-cut. The idea of the Platonic essence present in the statues is pleasant, but does it ignore one's obligations towards the living?

They bright as clock-face, we dark as the hands
that mark the time. We changing endlessly,
they never changing. Are they, really, cowards

behind the muslin curtains of each era
looming, hesitating? Who've never stood
at the slum door...

The two images, of the clock-face and the figures behind the curtains of an era, are strikingly effective, setting up a tableau of the situation for the reader. But soon the tableau changes, in favour of a timeless, Zen-like ideal which the statues come to represent: white, playing a child-like game on seashores. The attraction of this is that the morally demanding Marxian dialectic is replaced by an emphasis on a calm acceptance of one's self and the world around one, and a personal spontaneity. But the poem does not rest with such a view: it develops the

child-like spontaneity until it starts to seem more like mere vacuousness. Do the statues represent simplification or incompleteness?

Never was there such power as in their lifted fists,
never were bruisers and boxers so beautiful,
never was light so simplified to stand and fight.

Yet these the undefeated are the incomplete,
immature, refusing to be failures,

So the argument swings to and fro, generally building up a case for the rejection of the statues. But the poem ends on an eerie note of untouchable sorrow, as isolated as the statues: a sorrow which refuses to have its loneliness removed by revolution, community, or justice.

These poems are all socialist in outlook, despite their ambiguities. But they are different from the kind of socialist poem written by Brecht; different too from the poems of F.R. Scott. Brecht's are didactic in the best sense of the word, Scott's tersely satirical or thoughtful and objective. Anderson's poetry is highly personal: a diary of socialist belief written in attractive and original language, with imagery that is occasionally stunning. F.R. Scott described Anderson in 1958 as "a man in search of himself"²⁶, and these poems show a man of bourgeois upbringing, highly self-conscious and highly literate, portraying the conflicts which an acceptance of socialist ideology brings about. Some situations and attract him, seem to promise him something, but he feels compelled to reject them; there is no peaceful haven for the Marxist intellectual if he is to be true to the historical role assigned him.

Such conflicts in the poetry prepare one for the apolitical Anderson of Search Me; after the war his attention fixed itself upon questions of personality to the exclusion of political ideas. This is

apparent as early as January 1947, when his transparently autobiographical sketch "A Nest of Luck" was published in Northern Review, Volume One Number Four. This sketch centres upon his personal problems and unhappiness, which seem to have taken over from his wider, or political, consciousness: "I must live everything again, but this time I must own myself....Only by owning myself, and becoming whole, can I actually be a person to whom things happen." The idea of personal wholeness and self-possession was the positive side of the statue emblem.

Anderson tended to be less ambiguous in his war poems. He could be totally and bluntly anti-Fascist, talking of "Hitler's gangrene empire / and little Franco strutting in Spain's pus." ("Education", P 13), but in "Bombing Berlin" and "The Self Is Steep" the attack, while still conceived in terms of sickness, has become more subtle, more disturbing. In section three of "The Self Is Steep" (from A Tent for April), Anderson moves from a description of his own emotional state into something more generalised. From a collection of details about a depressing, claustrophobic room, he begins to put the emotional background of the poem to intellectual uses. The emotion he describes:

...goes in rooms
has buttons on it, or hairs. It is to touch
self-hood or boredom or the furniture which
fingers travel until they trench or snap.
The litter of that dump is sourly lit by a
great unmade bed - place of fears and
fingernails, or things kept in a box.

Anderson brilliantly links the setting of the stagnant room to visions of desperate action: a cripple hurling his crutches from the room's window at children in the sun; the window suggesting a sniper or assassin. But it is the concept of the sniper's and the murderer's motives which

are psychologically acute, and which are built on the whole movement of the poem:

The sniper knows it, shooting to be loved
and the murderer who hacks into a dream
the opposite body which will not approve

knows it, and the impacted bric-a-brac of
Germany, like a third-rate sitting room
grows dark and lonely with such love, such hate.

Anderson is at his best in this poem: his ability to generate emotion is being put to use intellectually, as image is skilfully built on image, within the basic metaphor of the room. His best poems strike one with an appearance of inevitability and appropriateness, as here, where he manages to present a stylised but completely convincing picture of the haunted and isolated atmosphere of Germany at the end of the war, driven in upon itself by enemies who assailed it from both sides.

The same theme is present in "Bombing Berlin", where the sickness of Fascism reveals the debilitating effects of repressive violence: "the poor cramped quarters of their hate," which forced the Allies to "take sides with life" in opposition. Even the swastika was a symbol of introversion, claims Anderson, turning in on itself: "we disintegrate the cross / they tried to bend / into a more self-contained shape."

It is not surprising that Anderson turned after the war to autobiography in Snake Wine and Search Me, for his Preview poetry has an autobiographical flavour to it. Unlike that of F.R. Scott, his social verse never aims at objectivity, or the extinction of personality. Scott's "Social Notes" are ironic and casual, and his tendency to include more Imagist poems in later collections like Signature (1964) strikes one as natural development. While Anderson was moving into autobiography,

Scott was leading up to Trouvailles (1968), a collection of "found poems" in which personality emerges only in the process of selection: this schematizes their respective Preview roles.

While Anderson is a highly individual poet, his work is a central part of the total Preview Group production. His poems tend to be the most dramatic and richly symbolic of Preview's treatments of war, politics and culture in Canada. For example, both "Bombing Berlin" and Scott's "Enemies" (P 16) treat the theme of the effect on the Allies of a war against Fascism, but from different angles, in the best Preview tradition of bringing different sensibilities to bear upon a common experience. Both approach the subject through a paradox; ^{Scott} ~~Shaw~~ sees the war as a strange mating:

We report every work you say.
Though we try to kill you
In destroying you we mate with you.
The aftermath is our joint child.

Anderson's approach is more flamboyant and oblique, and in some ways more brilliant, seeing the Allies forced almost against their will to "take sides with the sun."

Anderson's highly personal and extravagant approach to poetry runs risks, and it is true that the quality of his verse is uneven. His unashamed presentation of his own personality in poems ostensibly concerned with social problems raises the question of whether his judgement of a culture or of a system is valuable in any sense other than that of a personal reaction. One could bring against him the remark of Thoreau that "If any thing ail a man, so that he does not perform his functions, if he have a pain in his bowels even, - for that is the seat of sympathy - he forthwith sets about reforming - the world."²⁷ But

then one would have to agree that the apparent objectivity of Scott, because it is satirical in intent, is equally open to the same charge. One would have to point out too that Anderson's "pain in the bowels" -- in this case his quest for peace -- is often not helped by the uncompromising demands of his socialist ideals; and that he never attempts to present his view of Montreal, or of Fascism, under the guise of social science. Part of the attraction of his poetry is that it approaches society in a highly personal and metaphorical manner, yet succeeds in awakening tremors of sympathy from our own memories and perceptions: in this he is organising and integrating our own experience of society.

One's critical judgement does feel safer dealing with the social verse of Scott and Page, who each establish a sub-genre of their own and stay within its limits, whereas Anderson insists on leading the reader into highly charged emotional depths, where one feels that his extravagance is about to get out of control. When this happens, and a city becomes "marvellously terrible" (P 11), or the "Death of an Animal Man" (P 8) is converted into emotional blackmail, or the descriptive passages in "Summer's Joe" (P 2) begin to seem interminable, the result is catastrophic. But when he finds a theme which can give intellectual meaning to his barrage of imagery, there are resounding successes, and one senses a deeper involvement in the materials of the poem, and a greater sense of responsibility towards the imagery and its effects. In such cases his poetry has more to offer than his present reputation would suggest.

3. P.K. Page and F.R. Scott

One of the contrasts within the Preview Group was between the uneven brilliance of Patrick Anderson and the consistency of F.R. Scott; a contrast which extends to both their poetic and political roles. There are no completely unsuccessful poems by Scott in Preview, or in his books. There is an intellectual toughness in his verse which does not lapse easily into excessive emotion, and which guards against facile didacticism. The result is a spare, simply-phrased poetry which seldom registers failure, or generates a great deal of excitement. His satires are restrained, cool and witty, as in "Saturday Sundae" (P 19); his more personal poems, like "Bedside" (P 21), are quiet, simple, and often moving. Scott possessed vast energy, and his activities were not confined to literature. As well as being a professor of Law at McGill, he had been consistently left-wing in his politics since the thirties, when he was one of the designers of the CCF's Regina Manifesto in 1933. In 1932 he and F.H. Underhill had founded The League for Socialist Reconstruction, which took its place in the thirties as an ideological and research wing of the CCF.²⁸ Thus his activities in the thirties and forties included the direct political initiative of the CCF, the studies of the LSR (such as his Social Planning for Canada in 1935), and Preview, part of the literary wing of the left-wing movement.

One example of Scott's literary and political consistency emerges from a comparison of Canada Today's remarks on the similarity and mediocrity of the two major Canadian political parties²⁹ with his poem "General Election 1958", written twenty years later:

So switch off Uncle Louis and tune in Honest John
See the new vision, change the name of your brand,

Go to the drugstore today, follow the crowd,
 Take home the handy pack or family carton.
 When the Grey Cup is over, the Stanley Cup begins,
 And next year the Queen Mother will visit the unemployed.
 (Signature, 44)

The satire here is against both the facile nature of party propaganda, and the similarity of the Tories to the Liberals, which had been the central point in Canada Today's discussion of the Canadian political situation, and which is commented on too in the Preview poetry of Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw.

Preview was for Scott one stage in his energetic sponsorship of Canadian literary magazines and groups, which does place him in a slightly different position to that of the other four leading members of the group. Preview seems to have been at the centre of the lives of Anderson, Shaw, P.K. Page and Ruddick during the war. P.K. Page, talking to Dorothy Livesay in 1968 about the respect they all felt for Scott, remarked that he did not build his life around his involvement with the group, as the younger and less prominent members tended to do. Anderson recalled in his reply to a questionnaire in connection with this study that in 1945 "...the group began to go their separate ways. Frank Scott was always there, in Westmount, but we used to joke that, finding one little mag. going strong, he always tended to think of another, a new departure."

It is strange to compare the poetry of Scott and Anderson during the Preview period, and find that it was Anderson who leapt most often from definition and diagnosis of the social scene to an impassioned prefiguring of a socialist "cure", as in "Miners" or "Poem on Canada". Though Scott was the longer established socialist, and certainly remained a socialist longer than did Anderson, he seldom brings his poems to a

visionary or exhortatory conclusion. The last line of a Scott poem is more often suggestive and questioning: "Only the start of space, the road to suns." (Trans Canada", P 18); "The aftermath is our joint child." ("Enemies", P 16); "The fall from heaven, / the spear in the side of God, / and time's division." ("Paradise Lost", P 12).³⁰

Sometimes this technique does not satisfy the requirements of the poem. This could be said of "Examiner", which is a mixture of the personal and the public, and in some ways a typical Scott poem in its intelligence and directness, its evocative and persuasive atmosphere. It was first printed in Preview 14, and later collected in Overture and in the 1966 Selected Poems. The aim of the poem is to suggest a means to a new vitality in the individual and the structures through which he lives, works, and forms himself: an aim similar to that of other Preview poems such as "Recovery" (P 1), "Boston Tea Party 1940" (P 2) and "Flux" (P 12). "Examiner" is a poem against examinations. Scott "shudders" at "the narrow frames of our text-book schools / In which we plant our so various seedlings," and from this point of view the whole tone of the poem is an indictment of regimentation in education, and the "inadequate paper evidence" of the examination. But in the face of the "tight silence" and the pathos of the situation in which education shapes "the new to the old in the ashen garden", Scott's poem falls in its last lines into the inconclusive tone of sympathetic resignation:

As I gather the inadequate paper evidence, I hear
Across the neat campus lawn
The professional mowers drone, clipping the inch-high green.

One is forced into wondering what Scott is going to do about this situation, besides go off and mark the examination papers. He has avoided

being "didactic", in that he has presented his objections to the educational system without coming round to any definite proposals for the rectification of this system. So the poem is one of definition and diagnosis; but one feels the need for a sense of anger to revitalise it. P.K. Page's "Stenographers" is reported with something of the same objective and sympathetic tone, and there is a certain similarity between the conclusions of the poems: the pin-men of madness and the professional mowers sum up the argument of both. But the difference is that Scott is, however unwillingly, a part of the persecuting system in his role as examiner:

I, who have plotted their immediate downfall,
I am entrusted with the divine categories,
ABCD and the hell of E,
The parade of prize and the back door of pass.

P.K. Page had been the insider; Scott is on this occasion both the radical working for liberation from a crushing system, and the representative of the establishment. The position of the poet with relation to his material is therefore an awkward one, and Scott produces a competent poem which is not completely satisfactory because it fails to attack this ambiguity within itself except by adopting a tone of grudging and sad acceptance.

Scott's satires are perhaps the best-known of his poetry, and in them his refusal to become outraged has its virtues; the light touch succeeds with Boston tea parties, corner drug stores and obtuse politicians where heavy-handed condemnation would not. Like most of Scott's social verse, the satires first published in Preview: "Saturday Sundae" (P 19), "Boston Tea Party 1940" (P 2), and "Ode to a Politician" (P 3) attack people and situations devoid of vitality. The objects of his

satire are insulated from life: "Some glimmering concept of a juster state / begins to trouble him [the politician] - but just too late."

The literati in Boston are in limbo: "No rebel here shall dare to speak, / And round this world, who hears a shot?" The themes are summarised in the felicitous last line of "Saturday Sundae":

Such bread and circuses these times allow,
Opium most popular, life so small and slick,
Perhaps with candy is the new world born
And cellophane shall wrap the heretic.

But when Scott comes to a subject which is not merely insulated from life, but in his opinion parasitic upon it, as in "The Barons" (P 13), the tone of the attack is bitterer, an unmitigated broadside which may have been therapeutic for the writer, but which does not communicate much more than anger to the reader. "The Barons" was reprinted in Overture, but not included in the Selected Poems.

We have already seen in the poetry of Shaw, Ruddick and Anderson that insulation from reality, whether the reality of war, of social relationships, or of injustice, is a common Preview theme. It is present in Scott's war poetry as well as in his satires. "Recovery" (P 1) talks of a pastoral fool's paradise which symbolises the days of Munich, of non-intervention in Spain, and the attempt to compromise with Fascism:

We had played in the hanging gardens, lain in the sun
On a roof of glass. We had given no thought
To the deep soil of the base, the sunken shafts
Resting on rock. We loved the facade
More than the wall, the ivy more than the stone.
We took our gifts for our gains. We fed without ploughing.

The picture here of insulation against reality and forgetfulness of the need to review political assumptions is a variant of the state of mind

attacked in Ruddick's "Brother - You of the City" (P 1), the first half of P.K. Page's "Some There Are Fearless" (P 5), and represented by the skiers in Anderson's "Winter in Montreal" (P 21). The climax of "Recovery" is reminiscent of another Preview poem, "Bombing Berlin" (P 18). The coming of the war is a brutal re-awakening, but faith in humanity and freedom survives it; indeed, the war takes on the aspect of a terrible therapy:

This sharp blow pulls the excesses down,
Strips off the ornament, tightens the nerve,
Bares limbs for movement and the forward march.
More roads are opened than are closed by bombs
And truth stands naked under the flashing charge.

In "Bombing Berlin", Anderson portrays Nazism as the force which made the Allies "take sides with the sun"; "Enemies" also ends with a flash of light and insight. The enemies in both poems enter into a relationship whereby they determine the outlook of each other, as in Scott's "Enemies" they give birth to a common future. Scott's presentation of the theme is the more subdued: whereas Anderson thinks in terms of a bizarre tableau involving the cramped quarters of hate and the harsh light of truth, the former's regular four-stress lines present in the last two lines two epigrammatic sentences summarising the argument.

Scott's Preview verse gives an impression of balance and optimism, from the paternal "Advice" (P 1) to the contented "Windfall" (P 21). There is none of Anderson's battling between opposing desires, little of the tension produced by that writer's presentation of psychological malaise. Whereas P.K. Page's poetry often hovers on the brink of pain, Scott's is sympathetic and rational. Against Shaw's bewilderment and Ruddick's desperate brutality as reactions to the war, we have

Scott's contemplative "Enemies", and the dark comedy of "Fragment" (published under the title of "Armageddon" in Overture and the Selected Poems), which opens with a vision of everyone conquering someone else: "Suddenly the last boundary broke / And every land was used by somebody else."

Perhaps the reason for this impression of balance lies in the harmony between Scott's personal and social visions. He is a democratic socialist with a well thought-out system of political beliefs, and the things he admires and aims at in politics can be seen in terms of human qualities. In Signature (1964), the short statement "Creed" expresses his humanistic outlook:

The world is my country
The human race is my race
The spirit of man is my god
The future of man is my heaven.

One of the results of this humanism is that the things which he admires and those which he dislikes in the social poetry tend to cause a similar kind of happiness and sadness in the personal lyrics. For example, one of his main themes in Overture (1945), the book in which all but one of his Preview poems are collected, is the waste and insensitivity generated by Capitalism, which meant that "The British troops at the Dardanelles / Were blown to bits by British shells / Sold to the Turks by Vickers." ("Lest We Forget"), and that Canadian steel mills operate at 25% of capacity ("Social Notes"). Likewise, in the "Picture in Life" (Selected Poems, 75), it is the thoughtless destruction of animals "as a tourist / might stop to buy a postcard of Notre Dame" that lays waste myths and magic. "For R.A.S. 1925-43" (P 15), is a poignant elegy for a young man and writer who died before he could even reach the war itself. The interesting thing is that one does not sense that the poet is adopting a

special tone or subject-matter when he moves from personal lyrics to social commentary: the two blend so naturally together that one would be unwilling to place "For R.A.S." into one category or the other. It is concerned with the war, but the death is not merely used as a detail in a larger frame of reference, or exploited for its emotional value.

The values of the social poems are essentially the same as those in the most personal of the lyrics. As in "Recovery" the disaster of the war had drawn men together into a common cause, and suddenly thrown the truth of their situation into focus, so the anguish of "Bedside" (P 21), when "In June I saw the withering of my mother", leads to the consolidation of the family in the face of disaster. The dying mother, by becoming the centre of the family's consciousness, is the symbol of what they have in common:

We watched her time creep closer by the hour,
And every lengthened intake, each return,
Brought back some tender moment of her succour.
Each one of us was hers, and none his own.

Scott succeeds with such subject matter because of his poetic integrity: his simplicity leads the reader to trust his treatment of a delicate and emotional situation.

Scott naturally inclines towards affirmation, whereas one often feels that the poetry of other group members has grown out of conflicts, and represents an attempt to resolve them. In Anderson there is the temptation to assume roles, each of which express a part of himself: "I belonged to the theatre, I knew, and also this: / that love and fear were equally booked at my house" ("Montreal"). For P.K. Page, stenographers are to be pitied at work, but when at a "Summer Resort" (P 16) they appear

simply objectionable. In her poem "Waking" (P 13), the continents and their wars burst in on her waking world in such a way as to suggest that Neufville Shaw was right to say that compassion finally "drove her" to the left. In Ruddick's poems, especially "Plaque", "Conqueror" and "Rehabilitation", the conflict is between the desire for social change, an end to political complacency, and the cynicism which suggests that to be complacent is to be realistic.

There are passages expressing disturbance and doubt in Scott's poetry, but the only conspicuous one in Preview is the closing passage in "Trans Canada" (P 18), with its vision of an antiseptic, almost inhuman future of space exploration. The moon on a sea of cloud below his airliner suggests a lack of warmth and humanity, as had the less awesome "latex tintex kotex cutex land" of "Saturday Sundae".

It was an advantage to the group to have Scott produce fifteen poems for their magazine, as it was to have his experience in their meetings, and his name on their masthead. His work depends more on his wit and the directness of his thought than upon any stylistic brilliance. One might remember that "Paradise Lost" (P 12) links the idea of original sin with that of the first stirring of life on Earth, without remembering any particular phrase or image in which those ideas were expressed. The casual ironic style can, when unsuccessful, turn into flat simplistic prose, like "Hospital" (Overture, 24); or the ideas can completely take over the poem, as in "Audacity" (Selected Poems, 78). But in a magazine which thrives on conflicts and on explosive imagery, and which lapses at times into obscurity and youthful pomposity, the author of "Bedside" and "Saturday Sundae" examines personal situations, the war, and Canadian society with an admirably lucid intelligence. Preview would have been

much the poorer for his absence.

Like Patrick Anderson, P.K. Page was a "Preview product": her first publications were in the magazine, and her association with it was the beginning of a successful poetic career. Unlike Anderson's, however, her work continued to provoke critical admiration into the fifties. In fact, her reputation remained virtually intact through a long period of "silence" to her Cry Ararat! in 1967: a reputation sustained for thirteen years by The Metal and the Flower, which Northrop Frye pronounced the most enjoyable book of poetry he had read during 1954.³¹ An illustration of the way in which her poetry has "weathered" better is her inclusion in the "Canadian Library" anthology Poetry of MidCentury 1940-60, in 1964 from which Louis Dudek was excluded, and in which one could by no means expect to find Patrick Anderson.

The contrast between the present reputations of Anderson and Page is made more striking by the fact that when their volumes The White Centre and As Ten as Twenty were both published in 1946 by Ryerson, they were often reviewed side by side, and both found excellent by Northern Review, Poetry (Chicago), and the Canadian Forum.³² No preferences were expressed at that time for the poetry of Page over that of Anderson. It is only with the criticism of the fifties, such as that of Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada and Milton Wilson's "Other Canadians and After" that P.K. Page tends to be praised at the expense of her Preview partner. John Sutherland had not been of this opinion, and had written detailed critical analyses of both poets in Northern Review in 1947 and 1949³³.

Anderson's leaving Canada led Milton Wilson to the conclusion in "Other Canadians and After" that:

Since Anderson's Canadian Interlude came to an end in 1950, and he has never returned (although he has continued to write and publish), our belief in the anti-climax of the younger writers of the Preview Group will likely depend on what we think of the later poetry of P.K. Page.

This implies that Canadian poetry is in competition with all other poetry in English, and that Anderson had been transferred from "our team" to another. I suggested earlier that Anderson's poetry was something of a peculiarity on the Canadian literary scene, and that it had been neglected because of this. While P.K. Page had been influenced by Anderson in the forties, and had adopted some of his mannerisms, her poetry becomes more verbal, less adjectival, and less self-consciously playful in The Metal and the Flower and Cry Ararat!: nearer to the kind of poetry that Desmond Pacey and Milton Wilson seem to admire.³⁴ The title poem of Cry Ararat! presents the ideals of Imagism, though not in the Imagist manner, in its desire to see without judging, and to understand without "using" scenery or nature to one's own intellectual ends.

But this movement away from the Anderson approach to reality came in the fifties and sixties. In her twenty-two Preview poems, she shares many of his stylistic devices, even though the total effect of her verse differs from that of his. They both put great stress upon bizarre images, striking apposition of dissimilar words, and the use of simile, so that their Preview work gains most of its effects through simile, metaphor and adjectives. A recurrent mannerism in this verse is the use of nouns as epithets, a poetic device now out of fashion: Anderson's "engine boots" and "orchard sails", and P.K. Page's "vegetable rain", "waterfall stairs" and "calico minded." In The Metal and the Flower there is more stress on verbs, the poetry is less self-consciously clever in its manipulation of the language, with longer, more smoothly-flowing syntactic units.

Despite these stylistic similarities, and a tendency to set their individual stamp upon any scene or person they describe, P.K Page and Anderson are very different poets. While Anderson's poetry is extroverted, delighting in the expression of personality and of the relation of personality to social problems, Page's poetic persona is introverted, sensitive to the isolation and pain which lies below the surface of everyday life. Her Preview short stories, of which there are nine, illustrate this aspect of her work. "The Resignation" (P 10) tells of a young man whose rash claims force him into a choice between swallowing his pride or losing his job: those around him are insensitive, doing more harm than good in their attempts at kindness. "Them Ducks" (P 23) and "The Green Bird" (P 7) involve the narrator in eerie and somehow threatening relationships with a small boy and an old lady respectively. The participants in "The Rat Hunt" (P 15) have difficulty in communicating with one another, and the bible salesman in "The Lord's Plan" (P 6) is equally isolated. The narrator of the stories is sensitive, and quick to detect the undertones of strangeness in an apparently mundane encounter.

In the poetry too there are a number of haunting situations which threaten those involved in them. "The Bands and the Beautiful Children" (P 19), with its description of children following a band and getting lost when the procession ends, seems to point beyond the incident to something more disturbing and less tangible:

And the children, lost, lost,
in an open space,
remember the certainty of the anchored home
and cry on the unknown edge of their own city
their lips stiff from an imaginary trumpet.

The destruction of the band into "men / tired and grumbling" does not

invalidate the music and its magic attraction: it merely removes it to somewhere never again to be reached. The end of the band is the end of childhood, of that particular brand of imagination and enthusiasm, of security. It is the beginning of the "open space", where rules have to be formulated, where the act of living loses the spontaneity and immediacy of music, and becomes something to be painfully solved.

As "The Bands and the Beautiful Children" presents both an evocative description of a childhood experience, and a situation which suggests various kinds of loss and sudden insecurity, so P.K. Page's poems in Preview on the subject of typists are both sharply-realised descriptions of office life, and the medium for speculation on the nature of repetitious work and employees' attitudes towards it. The world of "The Stenographers" (P 5) is insanely repetitious, so lacking in intellectual interest that the materials of the job seem invested with an anaemic malignancy, pursuing the girls home and into their beds as they try to sleep:

...fighting to drown they assemble their sheep
in columns and watch them leap desks for their fences
and stare at them with their own mirror-worn faces.

The poem sees the girls' lives in terms not of their wage-pocket, their leisure activities or their individuality, but of their work, and the way that their work shapes their sensibilities. The employment is not simply a way of earning a living: it is also a process of self-definition, whereby the typists begin to see themselves in terms of their role in the office. Because the content of what they are typing is unimportant to them, and because the firm they work for is equally unreal for them, the "snow storm of paper" seems to exist for itself, and they to exist for it. The materials of the job take over the life of the typist in the

"Shipbuilding Office" (P 15), as she

rides the clock with spurs through ship and dock;
unrelated as a fable
to nineteen-forty,
her job, her jargon
or the permanent carbon
fixing eight sets of everything angrily upon paper.

The girls are locked in the job which enslaves and drains their lives because they refuse to relate themselves to it, to pause and think through the lack of meaning in what they are doing. They make themselves flat creatures for their working hours in order to fit into the flatness of the role they have to fill; they "...never once question the future, look ahead / beyond payday or ask the 'if' that makes them angular."

("Offices" P 16)

Many of P.K. Page's Preview poems which join personal and public themes can be seen as an attempt to "ask the 'if'" that will bring her nearer to reality, to move from the false peace which is a kind of sleep or drowning, into a calm outlook which is able to survey the world without fear, and experience it fully. The first poem she had printed in Preview was on this theme. "Desiring Only..." (P 2) is a demand for a passionate but realistic love affair without illusions or sentimentality: "pass me no thick-carpeted personal contact, / nor little slippers of pity and understanding." Her other poem in Preview 2, "No Flowers", consigns to the depths of the sea the bourgeois women whose pampered lives already insulate them from reality quite as effectively as submergence.

Some poems present at first a false sense of quiet, which is later destroyed by the intrusion of the hard facts of oppression and warfare. "Poem" (P 18) describes "a Catholic close / for innocence", then in its last lines snatches away the image of "the cool evening", advising the

reader to "suddenly remember Guernica / and be gone." "Waking" (P 13) sets up a similar pattern. From the attractive image of the first two lines: "I lie in the long parenthesis of arms / dreaming of love /... / wake to the bird a whistler in my room..." the image of war breaks in on the waking narrator, and she begins to accuse herself of losing consciousness and forgetting the world. Her sleep becomes a variety of sickness that keeps her separate from the world:

Invalid, I,
and crippled by sleep's illness,
drowned in the milk of sheets
and silk of dreams,

The result is a rather masochistic poem, where the poet appears to be setting her sleeping self up as a symbolic target for her own moral and social consciousness. Less introspectively moralising is "Some There Are Fearless" (P 5), an attack, like "No Flowers", on the thoughtless and the self-deceiving. Whereas Scott would have been content to satirize such people in the "Boston Tea Party 1940" manner, P.K. Page drives home bitterly her suggestion that such gaiety is a headlong flight from fear: fear of the times and fear of oneself. The tone is reminiscent of Rudick's "Brother - You of the City":

In streets where pleasure grins
and the bowing waiter
turns double-somersaults to the table for two
and the music of the violin is a splinter
pricking the poultice of flesh; where glinting glass
shakes with falsetto laughter,
fear, the habitu  , ignores the menu
and plays with the finger bowl at his permanent table.

The thin vowel sounds and the sharp consonants in the passage have the desired effect: they make the revelry sound desperate and

hollow. But, as in the last two poems we have examined, this first section of the poem is in effect an introduction to the contrasting closing lines, where a more vital ideal is presented for approval:

some there are fearless, touching a distant thing:
the ferretting sun, the enveloping shade, the attainable Spring
and the wonderful soil nameless beneath their feet.

But the contrast between the desperate pleasure-seekers and the visionaries is much too neat to be interesting. As in Ruddick's "Scenario", a short revolutionary appendix is suspended from the main body of the poem. In P.K. Page's case, the matter is complicated by the fact that the figure of Fear in the corner of the restaurant is the most striking image in the poem. The reader senses that he is a more authentic inhabitant of the poet's world than the idealists, "touching a distant thing". The same contrast could be extended to whole poems: the ecstatic "Love Poem" (P 16), with its vision of a community which defies death and frees men from the limitation of their own egos, strikes one as a less successful poem than "The Bands and the Beautiful Children" which faces it in As Ten as Twenty.

The difference between the two poems is that while "Love Poem" is delivered with a fine eloquence ("For we can live now, love: / a million in us breathe,"), the emotion it describes seems to come from nowhere. How has this feeling of community come about, and what was the insight that made it so real that only "now" can the lovers live fully? The poem is moving in its integration of the power of love and the joy of true identification with others in society, but most of its power is in its rhetoric: it is conceived in abstract rather than concrete terms. This is all the more noticeable because P.K. Page tends throughout her Preview

poems and those in The Metal and the Flower to select a concrete situation or tableau which will strikingly reflect and reinforce the emotional atmosphere and the intellectual meaning of the poem. I have already suggested how this technique works in "The Bands and the Beautiful Children"; likewise, the "spastic T-Bars" which "pivot and descend" in "T-Bar" sum up with uncanny accuracy the vague sense of loss suffered by the couple at the end of their trip side by side up the mountain. Something of the same atmosphere is produced by the eerie snowscapes in "Stories of Snow". All these poems explore the hinterlands of consciousness; the balance between the emotional and intellectual content and the physical setting makes them the most successful of her work. Miss Page's unerring taste in these disturbing pieces makes some of the Preview poems seem awkward in comparison. The truth may be that she was more at home with psychological malaise than with social optimism.

There is however another characteristic mode in P.K. Page's verse, where she assumes the role of moralist. From her first Preview poem "Desiring Only" through poems like "The Permanent Tourists" in The Metal and the Flower to "Cry Ararat!" in 1967, she castigates those who use relationships or memories as a crutch, who try to capture through photographs what they cannot experience at first hand, or grasp at a natural world which they cannot possibly own, or possess as an object.

The Preview years encouraged this moralising vein, but her attempts to link the moral and the social are not really successful. In retrospect it can be seen that Preview's somewhat messianic stance during the war, as a self-appointed guardian of culture and critic of society, had encouraged some of the less attractive aspects of her poetic persona. She was not the best of social poets, but the Preview atmosphere encouraged

her to try her hand at this genre. To a certain extent, she was successful: her series of poems on stenographers go beyond mere description to make genuinely meaningful observations about the nature of repetitious work. But there are three poems in which she tries to be more openly didactic, and succeeds only in being vindictive, or self-righteous in a witty manner. In "Waking", "Some There Are Fearless", and "No Flowers", the world divides too easily into "us" and "them". "We" are idealists in "Some There Are Fearless", while "they" are plagued by fear. "We" in "Waking" quiver with sympathy at the very mention of war-torn Europe. "They" in "No Flowers" are frivolous and vain, and non-productive. Two of these poems, "...Fearless" and "No Flowers" set up straw men (or women) in order to destroy them.

By the time of The Metal and the Flower, the shrill or self-pitying tone has been eradicated, and the more productive Preview mode, that represented by "The Bands and the Beautiful Children" and "Adolescence", has been developed. "Photos of a Salt Mine" shows the same emotional astuteness that marked "The Bands...", and the evocative images which marked "Adolescence" are brought to bear on other states of mind: that of the "Sleeper", and of the convalescent in "Probationer". Gone is the metaphorical extravagance which had been one of the marks of Patrick Anderson's influence on her at the time of As Ten as Twenty, and which had tempted her to use so many stunning images that the poem (like "The Stenographers") became a series of similes and metaphors rather than an organic whole. Here the language, while still striking, is harder and cooler, and she is aware of the dangers of overstatement.

There can be no doubt of P.K. Page's talent; while Preview printed some of her early poems which were not entirely successful, she,

perhaps more than any other poet in the group, produced poems which can take their place alongside the best work written in Canada this century.³⁵ The appearance of her new volume Cry Ararat! in 1967 suggested that while some of the Preview poems represented a false direction, a phase which she outgrew, there is a real sense in which her work still benefits from the ideas she encountered during the war.

The Preview poetry fulfilled the strictures of the manifestoes and criticism in that it brought the consciousness of the group to bear upon the war and upon the society within which they were living. There is a great variety of styles, attitudes and subject matter within the basic genre of social poetry: condemnation, scorn, moral indignation, wrath, fear, doubt, hope, exultation, cynicism -- all these emotions are to be found in Preview. There are poems which fall into the category of propaganda, but there are an equal number devoted to an examination of ideological doubt, and of splits within the poet between personal desires and social consciousness. Since they were not allied to any specific left-wing movement, the group felt free to explore the whole range of left-wing emotions and attitudes. Since they each possessed a different political standpoint, from Communism to liberal concern, the range of the conflicts runs from Anderson's rejection of peace in favour of a revolutionary role, to Scott's resignation to the mechanics of the examination in "Examiner".

The Preview experiment was born of the wartime period, and the poetry is full of the preoccupations of its decade, and a modern reader has to make a deliberate effort in order to comprehend some of it. But at its best it brings the atmosphere of the times to the reader, embodying it and explaining it simultaneously. Equally, there are questions

raised in Preview which remain perennial for the left-wing reader. How much bloodshed is the revolution worth? What is the relationship between personal discontent and left-wing political sympathies? What is the socialist's role in a country which has relinquished blatant economic exploitation of individuals, and to which the proletariat is resigned? Does the revolutionary become then the solitary malcontent of Anderson's "Montreal", who moves his attention to criticism of a cultural malaise? Such questions are not ephemeral, nor is their poetic expression in Preview of purely historical interest.

CHAPTER V

DISPERSAL

Following the rejection of his application to join the Preview Group, John Sutherland had formed First Statement magazine, with the help of Irving Layton and Louis Dudek. That had been in 1942, and both First Statement and Preview appeared in Montreal at monthly or two-monthly intervals until 1945. There had been some rivalry between the two groups, and the occasional harsh word spoken in editorials, but Patrick Anderson had published poems in First Statement, and Raymond Souster (who was primarily a member of the First Statement Group) had a poem, "Queen Street Serenade", in Preview 7. A.M. Klein published several poems in both magazines, and seems to have been welcomed into both groups.

The difference between the two groups was roughly that outlined by Desmond Pacey and Wynne Francis¹, though, as was suggested in Chapter II, "Montreal Poets of the Forties" is not a completely reliable guide. John Sutherland was irked by the fact that Anderson, Page and Wreford had been born in England; by the internationalist stand of Preview in politics and literature; and by the occasional lapse into pomposity in Preview editorials. He made it clear in his preface to Other Canadians² that he regarded the poetry in that anthology, and by implication the poetry of First Statement, as the guardian of a truly native tradition in Canadian poetry. He makes the same claims in First Statement itself:

For a number of generations, Canadians have been writing and expressing themselves in literary forms. In that time they have produced a literature with enough breadth and scope to be called Canadian.... [It is] the

business of a Canadian magazine...to serve Canadian writers only... Our desire [is] to exhibit...the various modes and types of writing as we find them in Canada. We would like to become the mirror of this variety and so provide the Canadian reader with the freedom of choice that he requires.

Sutherland's First Statement editorials constantly champion the cause of Canadian poetry. Three years after the above statement, in 1945, he exclaimed in surprise: "It is just a few weeks since Morley Callaghan wrote an article in New World on a most amazing subject: the decline of Canadian poetry. He chose to announce the decline of our poetry at the very moment when it was entering on a period of important growth!"⁴ Such encouraging statements were possibly conceived as a reaction not only to Morley Callaghan, but to Anderson's superior "we all know that Canada is very backward culturally..." (P 11)

However, such disagreements were shelved in 1945, when Sutherland, having turned publisher, printed Patrick Anderson's A Tent for April as number two in the "First Statement New Writers" series. (The first in the series had been Irving Layton's Here and Now.) The groups were brought even closer together, and in fact amalgamated, when Preview and First Statement combined to form Northern Review of the Arts and Writing in Canada, in 1945.

In some respects this was more of a take-over than an amalgamation, and it was John Sutherland who retained the controlling interest. Despite Wynne Francis's portrayal, in "Montreal Poets of the Forties", of Preview as part of the literary establishment, and First Statement as courageous upstarts, the fact remains that from August 1943 onwards, Sutherland's magazine was more professionally produced than Preview. For it was then that the industrious Sutherland acquired a printing press, and First Statement II, 1 (August 1943) is the first printed issue of the

magazine. From then until its demise, First Statement was a full-scale literary magazine, while Preview remained a "literary letter", with the advantages and disadvantages that entailed.

First Statement had advertising revenue, and a higher circulation than Preview. Consequently, it was larger, and had more space to print work by poets from outside the main First Statement Group. For example, it gave the first printing to Dorothy Livesay's long "documentary" poem "The Outrider", which had been written in 1935.⁵ The magazine was able to pursue the policy laid down in its full title (First Statement: A Magazine for Young Canadian Writers), and print work by unknown writers, as well as by the more well-established figures. The editorial to the March 1944 issue says that the magazine is "chiefly interested in writers whose styles are still in the process of development."⁶ Preview, for reasons which have been discussed in Chapter II, remained primarily a vehicle for the expression of the group of five.

First Statement differed from Preview too in its prose articles and stories. Because of its restricted size and format, Preview evolved a curious variety of short story: brief, allusive, often enigmatic pieces which seldom occupied more than three mimeographed pages. The stories are usually plotless, depending on psychological observations for much of their effect. In the case of those by P.K. Page, and the earlier pieces by Anderson, the stories tend to read with the somewhat stilted effect produced of a poet's attempt to write in prose without coming to terms with the difference between the two mediums. Patrick Anderson begins to come to terms with the prose medium and the restricted length in his series of "Notes from my Journal: Baie St. Paul" (P 10, 14, 17), and his study "Danny: Nova Scotia" (P 16). These are

delightfully observed studies deriving from Anderson's travels within Canada, which prefigure his travel books of the fifties and sixties.⁷ In contrast, the First Statement short stories, such as those by Irving Layton, are longer, more within the conventional short story form, and more concerned with plot. One also finds articles of cultural and political interest occurring more frequently in First Statement than in Preview.⁸ The format of the latter magazine was more suited to the printing of verse, and it was more of a poetry magazine than First Statement, which had a wider range of contents (though its poetry was the most memorable part of this range).

First Statement was, then, more of a conventional-style "literary magazine" than Preview, and this was the main reason for the merger. Sutherland had the press. The Preview Group could not contemplate expansion of their magazine within the restricted mimeographed format, and the easiest way to reach a larger audience and to produce an expanded magazine was to join forces with First Statement and make use of the press-printed technique. The press, then, was the primary reason for the merger given by P.K. Page and Patrick Anderson.⁹ But if the group had been determined to stay together and remain autonomous, some other means of having their work press-printed could have been found. The fact was that the group no longer felt any such determination. Preview, a child of the wartime world, lost its impetus with the coming of peace, and, as Anderson puts it, "we sank into his [John Sutherland's] arms."¹⁰ Neufville Shaw put it even more dramatically; for him the process was one of Sutherland "engulfing" the Preview Group:

The Northern Review succession came about because we had run out of steam. At about the same time, Contemporary Verse in Vancouver announced its death. We wired it to continue, with such stirring slogans as "the

forties thank you but the fifties need you." Contemporary Verse obstinately died, and we were left nothing but Northern Review. So we joined --listlessly. Sutherland engulfed us. He had the academic doggedness, a sheer professional persistence which kept him in the business until his death. We felt out of our times. We hoped in a tired reflex manner that Northern Review would preserve us. Of course, it couldn't.

(Questionnaire, June 1969)

Anderson talks in his reply to the questionnaire of John Sutherland's "commercial dynamism": both he and Shaw stress that Northern Review, despite their names on the list of its "Editorial Board", was under Sutherland's control. From this point of view, Sutherland's caustic and insulting review of Robert Finch's Poems¹¹ can be seen as his explicit declaration of independence. He published it without the fore-knowledge of the Preview members on the board, and they immediately resigned, almost as if they were glad to free themselves from the unsuccessful "preservation" through Northern Review.

The question remains as to why the Preview Group's wartime vitality had been so suddenly sapped in 1945 that they sought out Northern Review in an abortive attempt at self-preservation. There was the fact that 1945, the start of the peacetime era, found the members of the group departing into new ventures, and leaving Montreal. Anderson, the kingpin, went off to the mountains, to St. Sauveur des Monts. P.K. Page left for Ottawa. Bruce Ruddick was involved in training in psychoanalysis, and later became a doctor in the Canadian Army, stationed for a time at Camp Borden, Ontario. F.R. Scott was never short of other interests, although he did remain in Montreal, as did Neufville Shaw. In this situation, the advantage of Northern Review was that its scope was not limited to Montreal, but was national, with "contributing editors" scattered over Canada from Montreal to Vancouver. This was true in theory, that is; P.K. Page remarked in the 1968 interview that, as a contributing

editor, she never had any idea what the next edition was going to contain.

But there were other than geographical reasons for the disintegration of the group, and the clue to them is in Shaw's remark that "we felt out of our times." Preview had been formed in 1942 in the belief that there was a need for an intellectual or literary front at home to be the equivalent of the military struggle in Europe: "Now, more than ever, creative and experimental writing must be kept alive, and there must be no retreat from the intellectual frontier." The war had been as instrumental in the formation of Preview as had the group's socialist beliefs; in fact, the ideas of the war and of social change had been very closely linked in the group's thinking. While they had harboured few illusions about the terrors and wastefulness of death in battle, they had been able to appreciate the positive side of the struggle against Fascism. The war is portrayed in the poetry as an awakening, a taking sides with life, a struggle of the common people, a recognition of the reality of politics, and the possibility of change. An important Preview theme had been its portrayal of the war as the precursor of social change: "this war's already elementary", claimed Patrick Anderson.¹²

The war had been important in Preview's thinking, but it is difficult to see how exactly they had expected the war to lead to socialism: this seems to have been an article of faith rather than something to be debated in the magazine. One idea was that the troops would return as socialists, demanding after their efforts a system which would do them more justice than that they had known in the thirties; this is present in Anderson's "Soldier" (P 11):

for, soldier, you're a worker,
a whole earth you wear,
and your class is struggling, rising,
fighting everywhere.

The deliberate ambiguity of the last line is used to suggest a link between the class struggle and the war struggle, with the soldier taking a leading part in both. There is an element of truth in such thinking, when one considers that Mackenzie King had to undertake "a programme of reform... of far-reaching consequences" in 1943, and that even so the Liberals were returned in the election of June 1945 with a drastically reduced majority.¹³ The CCF representation in the Commons rose by 260% in this election; even so "The CCF's success was much smaller than it had expected. The success was actually a defeat, a disappointing shock from which socialism in Canada has not yet recovered."¹⁴

The socialization of the soldier was not the only way in which Preview saw the war and socialism as closely linked. Preview 11 was "dedicated to the red army whose recent heroic successes have done so much for the cause of human freedom and culture everywhere." Russia is also mentioned with approval in Previews 7 and 8, where it is implied that Russian and Canadian poets have been supplied with common themes in the fight of both their countries against Fascism, and the call is sent out for a poet capable of handling the theme of the defence of Stalingrad. For the duration of the war, the western capitalist nations were the allies of the USSR. For the group, this meant that their own politics had been brought directly into contact with a country where socialism already existed, as well as with European nations where "the prospects for socialism... were bright indeed."¹⁵ For the duration of the war, the idea of an international class struggle seemed more of a reality; even if a socialist Canada was not immediately possible, it was something to be worked on, with the knowledge that one was part of a global struggle.

Shaw, in his "Electrical Plant" (P 11), relates an incident which

suggests that Stalingrad had forced Canadians to take another, less jaundiced look at the USSR:

"It was not all true what they told us about Russia", a sweeper tells me pushing away the headlines with a massive gesture, "All lies. They must have a good land to fight like that. How can we believe the papers now? Once they told us all was bad in Russia. Now they tell us all is good, and all is bad in Germany. Maybe all is good. We don't know maybe."

With the end of the war, such close contact with the USSR, and with other European countries, tended to fade: one could no longer feel that Canada and Russia were linked in a common cause. With the coming of the Cold War, Western socialist groups and left-wing individuals were less willing to identify themselves with Soviet Socialism, Stalinism and repression. The war had encouraged the group to think in international terms: to write poems such as "We the People" (P 15), "Generation" (P 8), "Enemies" (P 16) and "Factory Posters" (P 11). With 1945, and peace, came a Liberal government, Mackenzie King as Prime Minister, and Orderly Decontrol:

Only one thread was certain:
After World War I
Business as usual,
After World War II
Orderly decontrol.
Always he led us back to where we were before,¹⁶
(F.R. Scott - "W.L.M.K.")

Ruddick's cynical prophecy in "Rehabilitation" (P 10) must have seemed uncomfortably near to being fulfilled by June of 1945. For a time, the international outlook which Preview had fostered had to give way to a concentration on Canada and her post-war development. Mackenzie King's idea of what post-war development involved was, needless to say, different from that of the Preview Group:

First we must give away all the assets of war:
 Stores, trucks, equipment, goods of every kind,
 And all the factories built with public money.
 These must be channelled toward monopolies,
 Which will surely exploit them.¹⁷ This we shall call
 Restoring free enterprise.

Scott seems to have been able to resign himself to continuing his series of satires; "Orderly Decontrol" is in the tradition of the Preview satirical poems, adapted to meet the new conditions. But Preview itself was not adapted to continue under such circumstances: it was, quite literally, out of its times. If the group had wished to stay in Montreal and publish together, it is probable that they would have had to reform the approach and format of their magazine for it to reflect the preoccupations of a new era. But the members themselves were growing restless, and feeling that a more complete break was required for their careers to continue development. Patrick Anderson, who was inclined to mull over his personal problems in public in his books and in magazines, has left a record of his feelings at this time in an article entitled "A Nest of Luck", published in Northern Review at the end of 1946. The sketch is in the third person, but is obviously autobiographical, like almost everything else Anderson has written. The man in the sketch regards the end of the war as a turning-point in his life; he feels a sense of loss combined with a vague excitement about the future:

Looked back on from this point, the war seemed already to have marched and moaned itself away into a historic incident which left one, nevertheless, with a keen sense of neural damage....the war dwindled before the strangeness of the present point -- after the war. How could one live without the war: how could one live without an enemy, an opposer? Already one felt, in the grey incredulous gulph of these days, certain out-of-date pre-war attitudes reforming themselves.... As a matter of fact, a renewed consciousness of wealth and an upsurge of ambitious fantasies and envy had been one of the results of the peace. In war one lived so close, so far down, like a proletarian or a criminal. But the collapse

of the Third Reich and the atomic bomb attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki had opened one up, and in this new space, this rather nervous freedom, the old ideas and feelings rose beside one.¹⁸

The protagonist of the sketch finally gains a faith in the future by discovering a nest of lady-birds, which he regards as a symbol of hope, a nest of luck. In the period between the end of the war and the writing of this article, Anderson has moved from the socially-orientated editor of Preview to the writer faced with a future which is just a little too open and full of possibilities; a writer who can mention Hiroshima and Nagasaki as a means of explaining his own "nervous freedom", rather than in their own right. Already, his attitudes are nearer those of Search Me than those of Preview, and his preoccupation with the search for self has taken over from his socialist consciousness.

The Preview Group thus fell into John Sutherland's arms, and into the publication of Northern Review, at a time when its members were looking about them for a new sense of direction. After their mass resignation from the Editorial Board in 1947, they accepted that the group had in effect disbanded, and pursued their separate aims. For P.K. Page, this meant a job with the National Film Board, marriage in 1950 to W.A. Irwin, and the publication of a book of post-Preview poems, The Metal and the Flower, in 1954. Bruce Ruddick gave up writing, and concentrated on his career as a psychiatrist, finally setting up a practice in New York. Neufville Shaw also ceased to publish his work when the stimulus provided by Preview no longer operated, and settled down to teach in Montreal. For F.R. Scott, things went on much as before; he continued to write, and take an interest in the CCF (and later the NDP), as well as teaching at McGill. He was instrumental in getting Patrick Anderson a lectureship at McGill in 1948: Anderson taught there until 1950, when he decided to

take a post at the University of Singapore, and left Canada after an eleven-year stay. He is at present teaching in England, and writes mainly in prose: "literary journalism", in his own words. His last book of poems, The Colour as Naked, contained poems written in Canada, Singapore and England, and was published here in 1953.

The careers of the three members who continued to write and to publish after the end of the war provide some further insights into the importance of Preview in their development. Until 1967, and the publication of Cry Ararat!, it seemed that P.K. Page's poetic career, like Patrick Anderson's, had reached an end in the early fifties. The Metal and the Flower, published in 1954, was in many ways an improvement on As Ten as Twenty, and suggested that in some respects Preview had led her to pursue avenues for which she was not properly equipped. The didactic poet of "Some There Are Fearless" and "Waking" is not present in the 1954 volume; absent too is the self-righteousness which had appeared in "No Flowers" and "Summer Resort".

But the Preview heritage had not proved completely negative for P.K. Page. While "Photos of a Salt Mine" is not didactic in any political sense, it is definitely a poem about exploitation, both economic and aesthetic, and moral in its intentions. It is possible to see its rebellion against the idea of using a scene of backbreaking labour as a source of pretty photographs as an extension of Preview's highly developed moral sense. While the negative side of this had been the self-righteousness mentioned in Chapter IV its more objective use brings a reasoned and justified note of disapproval to "Photos of a Salt Mine", "The Permanent Tourists". She joins the strict tone of her admonitions on personal relationships in "Desiring Only" (P 2) to this moral sense to produce poems on

other aspects of exploitation, in Cry Ararat!. "Love Poem" says that we must not exploit our memories like misers, but allow them to become part of ourselves:

For memory which is only decadent
 In hands like a miser's
 loving the thing for its thingness,
 or in the eyes of collectors who assess
 the size, the incredible size, of their collection,
 can, in the living head, create and make
 new the sometimes appallingly ancient present
 and sting the sleeping thing
 to sudden seeing.

(Cry Ararat!, 67)

In the title poem of the 1967 volume, the moral sense and the disapproval of exploitation are still present, but this time combined in a gentle admonition not to exploit the external world in contemplating it, but to recognise its existence without forcing it to submit to one's preconceptions. There is a definitely mystic attitude in "Cry Ararat!", reminiscent of the teachings of Vedanta:

Do not reach to touch it
 nor labour to hear.
 Return to your hand
 the sense of the hand;
 return to your ear
 the sense of the ear.
 Remember the statue,
 That space in the air
 which with nothing to hold
 what the minute is giving
is through each point
 where its marble touches air.

(Cry Ararat!, 104)

The statue is the symbol of peace, as it had been for Patrick Anderson in Preview; but in this case it stands not for a stable ego, but for the extinction of the individual ego. In this poem P.K. Page seems to want to present the world and bow out of the poem simultaneously,

in much the same way that an adult teaching a child to ride a bicycle will begin by holding the saddle, and then let go without the child knowing.

Despite its similarity to "Desiring Only", and to explorations in Preview, such as Anderson's and Shaw's, as to the correct way in which to relate to the world¹⁹, "Cry Ararat!" is in no sense a Preview poem. The subject-matter is the individual consciousness rather than society, and the style self-consciously simple rather than self-consciously complex. But it may be that "Photos of a Salt-Mine" and "The Permanent Tourists" will prove to be her most impressive achievement; and they strike one as the mature verse of the P.K. Page of Preview. Moreover, there is no means of calculating the value of the excitement the Preview period brought to her writing: she speaks today of the new perspective the group provided for her -- how through them she saw things that would not otherwise have come to her notice; and claims the years from 1942 to 1945 as perhaps the most influential in her career.

The volume of poems which Patrick Anderson published in the fifties, The Colour as Naked, has not received the attention it deserves from Canadian critics. While all writers on the poetry of P.K. Page take The Metal and the Flower into account, Anderson is usually treated as the author of A Tent for April and The White Centre. In fact, The Colour as Naked contains some of Anderson's best poetry. As might be expected, the explicitly political poetry of The White Centre has been replaced by a type more in tune with Anderson's feelings after the breaking-up of the group and the ending of the war. There is still a concern with social themes, but in "Houses Burning: Quebec", "Eden Town", and "Leaving Canada" the social comment is more subtly expressed, and linked to the more des-

criptive aspects of the poems. The description of the burning slum in the first of these poems, for example, is not simply an excuse to write on the subject of slum clearance; the fire has a genuine physical fascination.

The Colour as Naked is less extroverted in its approach to the reader than much of Anderson's earlier verse. There are fewer attempts to introduce the personality of the poet into the poems, or to lay bare his soul in the manner of, say, parts one, two and four of "The Self Is Steep" from A Tent for April. The poems are also more restrained in their use of language; like P.K. Page, Anderson realized between 1946 and 1953 that it was possible to drown a subject or theme in metaphor, and began to use his figurative language more responsibly. The result of this is that the brilliant flow of imagery which had marked the Pre-view verse, giving it an air of feverish excitement, and producing surprise, has been replaced by a concern for the poem as a whole rather than as a series of special effects. "Song of Intense Cold", for example, is a neatly structured poem which aims at an effect of stillness through repetition and concentration. The poem has three sections, each introduced by a different comment about the stars: "One night when the stars are exploding like nails / ... / One night when the stars are dials / ... / And I wake when the stars are buzzing like flies." All of the poem's imagery is concentrated on this single effect, of a stillness full of suspended activity; most of the Preview poems aimed at a series of brilliant local effects, rather than a completed and integrated poem. ("Montreal" is an example of a poem which, seemingly intoxicated with its own descriptive powers, accumulates more detail than is strictly necessary for the presentation of the theme.)

However, I suggested in Chapter Three that there are several Pre-

view poems by Anderson which use imagery to generate emotion, but put the emotion to some intellectual use, so that it supports the thought in the poem. In "Bombing Berlin", part three of "The Self Is Steep", "The Statues", "Winter in Montreal" and some other poems, Anderson's linguistic cleverness is harnessed to an interesting theme. This seemed the most fruitful of his three types of poems, more so than his merely descriptive pieces, or his socialist exhortations. It is this type of poem that he concentrates on in The Colour as Naked. In fact, the last poem in the book, "Ballad of the Young Man" discusses the place of thought and emotive description in poetry in an ironic and sophisticated manner, finally prompting the conclusion that both are necessary in verse.

As the last poem in his last volume of poems, "Ballad of a Young Man" stands as a comment on much of Anderson's poetry of the previous decade. That his poetry can be extravagant, self-indulgent, obscure, there is no doubt. But it often carries a conviction that makes it much more valuable than ~~shere~~^e "aesthetic talk": the questions of personal stability and social consciousness discussed in "Statues", and the speculation in "Bombing Berlin" and "The Self Is Steep" on the relationship between political systems and "national consciousness", cover topics of genuine importance.

The change in Anderson's verse between 1946 and 1953 might just reflect the difference in opinions between a thirty-one year old poet, and one of thirty-eight: there is definitely less wild exuberance in the later volume. But the difference could also be related to the fall of Preview. The magazine had stimulated Anderson, as it had all the members of the group, and its social interests brought about his unique amalgam of the personal and the public in poetry. But it might be doubted

whether Anderson's position as leader of the group, much as he enjoyed it, was beneficial to his poetry. There was no-one in the group capable of contesting the egoism and excesses that occasionally mar his work, or of suggesting that he moderate his tone in the exhortatory poems. Where his early poetry strikes one as undisciplined, this may be due in part to the fact that he was the centre of a group where three of the four other members were more interested in assimilating his techniques than suggesting how his poetry might be improved.

F.R. Scott has continued to publish regularly, and with remarkable consistency: in looking through the 1966 Selected Poems, which are not arranged in chronological order, it is difficult to judge when individual poems were written. Some, like the war poems and the topical satires, betray their age through subject-matter, but the more personal lyrics from different previous volumes are very similar in style. There are, however, some developments in Scott's attitude towards his material. One is that after the Preview period there is an increased number of intimate poems in the manner of "Windfall" and "Bedside" (P 21). Patrick Anderson, commenting on these poems in Preview 21, had anticipated this development: "One associates precision of statement and epigrammatic brevity and wit with the poems of F.R. Scott. While the following two poems are perfectly explicit, they reveal an emotional depth and concern with emotional experience which have not always been present in Scott's verse." There are features in "Watching Margaret Dying" (Signature, 39) reminiscent of both the poems from Preview 21: the quiet integrity of its attitude toward suffering and death is like that of "Bedside", and like "Windfall" it refuses to see death in a purely human context:

Beautiful in death, as the still enveloping flame
 Glows into darkness
 You touch with invisible rays
 Hidden responses of being.
 So the cold green light
 Rims the nothern sky, and the cool
 Flow of wind from the hills
 Fulfills a Canadian day.

The other development noticeable in the later poems of Scott is an interest in the Imagist approach to landscape, which is suited to his "precision of statement and ^P~~p~~igrammatic brevity", and is visible in such poems as "New Names", "Mackenzie River" and "Plane Landing in Tokyo" from Signature. The last of these is a deliberate attempt at the Japanese Haiku form.

It seems that the Preview period was not as formative an influence on Scott as it had been on the four younger members of the group. He came to it as a mature poet with a well-developed style of his own, and a fully-fledged political sense. It has already been pointed out in Chapter IV that he was regarded within the group as something of a "special case" because of his extensive outside interests; it was probably these interests that allowed him to come to terms with the peacetime world and the end of the magazine. While the Failure of the CCF to win the 1945 election must have been a disappointment to him, his socialism was more deeply rooted than that of the other members of the group, and consequently survived into the fifties, and the start of the new era with the NDP.

Scott's social verse had been an integral part of the Preview achievement, and many of his themes, as we have seen in Chapter IV, are closely linked to those which other members of the group were exploring. But Scott had been writing social satire in the thirties, and con-

tinued to do so in the fifties and sixties, whereas for the other members the war was the period of intense political excitement which launched them into the genre of social verse. From this point of view, the most distinctly Previewesque of his poetry is that which concerns itself with the war itself: "Fragment", "Enemies", "For R.A.S.", and "Recovery". These are the poems in the Scott canon which are most closely associated with Preview rather than with any of his other enterprises.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Interesting and productive as the Preview experiment was, there is no need to regret the disintegration of the group after four years' existence; as Neufville Shaw put it, "we fell away as naturally as falling leaves." (Questionnaire) Any group of the Preview type must have a limited life-span, since its usefulness depends on the extent to which the members can stimulate one another intellectually, and provide fruitful discussion. If this process goes on for more than five years, or at the most a decade, without the addition of any new members, one is likely to find that the group is an institution for self-congratulation rather than for literary criticism and cross-fertilization. This can happen to the most talented of groups. The cliquish private jokes in Auden's poetry, what G.S. Fraser calls "the insolently ostentatious privacy of many of his references"¹ are perhaps the least attractive features of his work. When the idea of using a series of private references occurs to one of the fringe-members of his entourage, the effect is purely embarrassing, as in Gavin Ewart's "Audenesque for an Initiation".²

As a further example, one could cite "the Movement" in England in the early sixties, and its anthology New Lines, edited by Robert Conquest. The Movement was conceived originally as a counter to the more wildly emotional of the followers of Dylan Thomas; in contrast, the poetry of New Lines' Enright, Larkin, Conquest, Davie and Amis was quiet, rational, polished, often self-deprecating. It was good enough to have a profound effect on modern English verse, until its calmness, and its

determination not to be swayed by loose emotion, came to represent a poetic flatness which was itself attacked and reacted against by Charles Tomlinson and Ted Hughes.

In Canada too there are examples of the way in which a group can become over-exclusive, and show signs of having outlived its usefulness. Dorothy Livesay, talking on CBC's "Anthology" about Alan Crawley and Contemporary Verse, claimed that:

In Canada we've been rifled by cliques, and we still are you know. Every city has its circle and its fans and its...self-adulation going on, but Alan was completely free of this. And he did get people from all parts of the country writing...I mean the Montreal group around First Statement was a fascinating group, but it was a clique. For instance, I never got into any Montreal magazine, but anyone from there could and did write for Contemporary Verse and get published;...

One's judgment of the Preview Group atmosphere must, I think, be ambivalent. On the one hand, it encouraged the members of the group to write, to think out the implications of the approach to writing they had adopted, and to regard their own work critically along with the other members. The group structure was responsible for the body of poetry which has been examined in the preceding pages, and for the way in which poem builds upon poem to form the complete Preview oeuvre. On the other hand, the group was exclusive, and of necessity short-lived. I have suggested in Chapter V that nowhere is this ambivalence more apparent than in the career of Anderson: it was as the leader of Preview that he felt the need to write poetry, and was inspired to produce some remarkable work; on the other hand, it is debateable whether the role of admired leader was the one best calculated to discipline his unruly talent.

For four years, the conditions for Preview's growth were extremely favourable. There existed the subject-matter of the World War, and of

Montreal in wartime, and the Preview writers were united in their treatment of this subject matter by their left-wing politics. The group was led by a dynamic young poet whose distinctive style was a constructive influence, and whose ideas gave the group a sense of purpose. They were socialist when socialism was for the first time a potent force in Canadian politics, and when the first democratically-elected socialist government in North America took power, in Saskatchewan. Under these conditions, a body of verse was written which still has the power to stimulate and interest a modern reader. At the beginning of 1945, however, signs of change appear. Previews 22 and 23 are not a product of the whole group: there are some mediocre contributions from writers outside the group, Scott, Ruddick and Shaw are absent, and there is no editorial comment. It may have been that, but for the dramatic turning-point of 1945, the magazine would have died a more lingering death, or have undergone a radical change in character and personnel; but the Preview Group as it has been examined in this study perished with the coming of peace.

However, part of the purpose of this study has been to suggest that it is a mistake to conclude that Preview has nothing to offer the post-war world. It is indeed deeply rooted in its period, but this is true of all poetry which attempts to see human beings in relation to the society in which they live, work, and form themselves. But good social verse is not based simply on the transient aspects of social history; it casts light on the principles upon which societies are based, and which affect the lives of men as much as the structure of manners and custom. It is, in fact, an affirmation of the importance of community for the individual, and of the individual's responsibility towards the community. Such responsibility is at the heart of much Preview verse; Anderson's

long "Poem on Canada", written during the war, is simultaneously an affirmation of the Canadian's responsibility towards the beauty and resources of his country, towards his fellow Canadians, and towards the Canadian culture which grows out of these relationships. As a representative of this genre, the Preview poetry has its fault, as one would expect of work published as a monthly selection of "work in progress". There are poems in the magazine which are clichéd, simplistic, obscure, or composed of empty rhetoric. Nevertheless, there is a large amount of material which represents an accomplished and worthwhile addition to Canadian literature, and which deserves to be recognised as such.

FOOTNOTES

Chapter I

¹In a tape-recorded conversation with Dorothy Livesay, December 1968.

²For a detailed discussion of the available criticism of Preview see Chapter III

³F. R. Scott, "The Revival of Poetry", The Canadian Forum, XI (May 1931), 296.

⁴Expressed in the 1969 questionnaire.

⁵In his review of Patrick Anderson's Search Me, Tamarack Review, III (Winter 1958).

⁶A. J. M. Smith, "New Canadian Poetry", The Canadian Forum, XXIV (February 1947), 252.

⁷Expressed in "Canadian Poetry 1942" (Preview 8), and in the interview with Dorothy Livesay.

⁸Quoted in Pacey, Ten Canadian Poets, 275; and in Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties".

⁹Ten Canadian Poets, 274.

¹⁰All references to quotations from Preview will be indicated by P, followed by the number of the issue in question. For example, P 15 indicates Preview issue number fifteen.

¹¹P. K. Page, "Canadian Poetry 1942" (P 8); Neufville Shaw, "The Maple Leaf Is Dying", (P 17).

¹²In this connection, it is interesting to read William Meredith's review of P. K. Page's As Ten as Twenty in Poetry (Chicago) for July 1947, entitled "A Good Modern Poet and a Modern Tradition", and find that he stresses that P. K. Page is a poet for whom the tradition founded by Eliot is the natural one in which to write; that she is completely at home in the modern idiom. Seeing her work from this point of view, it is easy to imagine the attraction of the young, cosmopolitan Preview Group for Scott: they were in a sense the fulfillment of a campaign he had begun back in The McGill Fortnightly, and dealing with contemporary reality in a modern manner.

Chapter II

¹In the 1969 questionnaire.

²Letters from these editors are quoted in the Editorial to Preview 4.

³Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties", Canadian Literature, XIV (Autumn 1962).

⁴In reply to the thesis questionnaire, 1969.

⁵For example, Wynne Francis's "Montreal Poets of the Forties"; Milton Wilson's "Other Canadians and After"; and Desmond Pacey's Creative Writing in Canada.

⁶Storey, The Oxford Companion, 459.

⁷This statement was the crux of Preview 1's manifesto.

⁸Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 155.

⁹Thorburn, ed., Party Politics in Canada, 70.

¹⁰Creative Writing in Canada, 155.

¹¹Preview 11: quoted in Creative Writing in Canada, and in "Montreal Poets of the Forties".

¹²Preview 1: quoted in Klinck, ed., A Literary History of Canada, 489.

¹³Smith, ed., Masks of Poetry, 123-138.

¹⁴Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties".

¹⁵In his review of Anderson's Search Me, Tamarack Review III (Winter 1958).

¹⁶In conversation with Dorothy Livesay, December 1968.

¹⁷Auden, Collected Shorter Poems, 168.

¹⁸Anderson, Search Me, 149.

¹⁹Skelton, ed., Poetry of the Forties, 24.

²⁰Ibid., 19.

²¹Anderson, A Tent for April, 20.

²²Auden, Collected Shorter Poems, 142.

²³P. K. Page, As Ten as Twenty, 14.

²⁴Auden, Collected Shorter Poems, 33.

²⁵Ibid., 31.

²⁶Anderson, "Wild Duck", The White Centre, 49.

²⁷G. M. Hopkins, "As Kingfishers Catch Fire. . .", Collected Poems, 82.

Chapter III

¹Preview 1 is quoted in Klinck, ed., A Literary History of Canada, 489, where it is the only quotation from the magazine. Preview 11 is quoted in Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties", and in Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 155.

²Martin Ellis, "The Teheran Line", First Statement, II (Oct-Nov, 1944), 17-20.

³Reply to a questionnaire in connection with this thesis, June 1969.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Anderson, A Tent for April, 20.

⁶Skelton, ed., Poetry of the Forties, 17.

⁷William Empson, "Just a Smack at Auden", Poetry of the Thirties, 64.

⁸Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 155.

⁹Anderson, Search Me, 152.

¹⁰G. Horowitz, "Conservatism, Socialism and Liberalism in Canada: An Interpretation", in Hugh G. Thorburn, ed., Party Politics in Canada, 55-73.

¹¹Skelton, ed., Poetry of the Thirties, 41.

¹²Anderson, Search Me, 152.

¹³In reply to the June 1969 questionnaire.

¹⁴In reply to the questionnaire, July 1969.

¹⁵Anderson and Shaw in their replies to the questionnaire describe her in roughly these terms, and in her tape-recorded conversation with Dorothy Livesay (December 1968), she makes much the same comment about herself.

¹⁶Questionnaire, July 1969.

¹⁷Anderson, The White Centre, 45.

¹⁸Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism in Canada...", 72.

¹⁹Fergus Glenn, "Thunder on the Right", The Canadian Forum, XXII (February 1942).

²⁰"Wanted: A Post-War Plan", The Canadian Forum, XXII (Feb. 1943).

²¹Quoted in The Canadian Forum, XXII (Feb. 1943), 300.

²²Ibid., 300.

²³There are five poems on the subject of Stenographers and office work in Preview, all by P. K. Page: "The Stenographers", (P5); "Typists" (P 11); "Shipbuilding Office", (P 15); "Summer Resort", (P 16) and "Offices" (P16).

Chapter IV

¹Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 159.

²Wilde, Intentions, 17.

³Quoted in Fischer, The Necessity of Art, 211.

⁴Reply to questionnaire, 1969.

⁵Lukacs, Studies in European Realism, "Balzac".

⁶Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, 470, quoting opinions gathered in W. V. O'Connor, An Age of Criticism, 119-24.

⁷Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, III, 241.

⁸Wimsatt and Brooks, Literary Criticism, 471.

⁹Previews1, 9, 11, 21.

¹⁰Many of the poems discussed in this section are collected in the Appendix.

¹¹As in Ruddick's poems on soldiers, or the "O Canada" column in The Canadian Forum throughout the war.

¹²Scott, Canada Today, 66.

¹³Ibid., 71.

¹⁴Quoted in Thorburn, ed., Party Politics in Canada, 70.

¹⁵Jessica Nelson North, "Mercurial", Poetry (Chicago) LXIX (Feb. 1947), 284-6.

¹⁶A. J. M. Smith, "New Canadian Poetry", The Canadian Forum, XXVI (Feb. 1947), 252.

¹⁷John Sutherland, "The Poetry of Patrick Anderson", Northern Review, II (April-May 1949), 8-20, 25-34.

¹⁸Northrop Frye, "Letters in Canada: 1953", University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIII (April 1954).

¹⁹Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 156-8.

²⁰Smith, ed., Masks of Poetry, 126.

²¹Anderson, Search Me, 149.

²²Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties".

²³W.W.E. Ross, Shapes and Sounds, 48.

²⁴Brecht, Selected Poems, 108.

²⁵In Engels' "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific", the last stages of capitalism, immediately preceding the proletarian revolution, are those in which the more blatant "absurdities" of the system become less apparent, as the capitalist is replaced by joint-stock companies and trusts. However, this period embodies "contradictions", which only a proletarian revolution can solve. Anderson, who was reading Marx and Engels during the war, was probably more taken by the cultural implications of such a prophecy (i.e. that it would be a period of external quiet, but internal confusion), than the economic argument, which could not be applied wholesale to Canada. (Certainly not to Saskatchewan, which had missed the war boom, and whose Provincial Debt was \$223 million. Douglas's CCF Government was not put into power in a period of illusory calm, but in one in which wheat was 50 cents a bushel, and 81% of the Saskatchewan economy was agricultural. See Douglas's comments on the NDP Government in Manitoba, Edmonton Journal, August 15, 1969, p. 13.)

²⁶F. R. Scott, review of Patrick Anderson's Search Me, Tamarack Review, III (Winter 1958).

²⁷Thoreau, Walden, 52.

²⁸Pacey, Ten Canadian Poets, 231.

²⁹See page 57 of this study.

³⁰All Scott's Preview poems except "The Barons" and "Non-Essential" are present in his 1966 Selected Poems.

³¹Northrop Frye, "Letters in Canada: 1954", University of Toronto Quarterly, XXIV (April 1955).

³²Reviewed by John Sutherland in Northern Review, J. N. North and W. Meredith in Poetry (Chicago), and A. J. M. Smith in The Canadian Forum.

³³John Sutherland, "The Poetry of P. K. Page", Northern Review, I (Dec.-Jan. 1947), 13-23; and "The Poetry of Patrick Anderson", Northern Review, III (April-May 1949), 8-20, 25-34.

³⁴Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 158. Of all Anderson's verse, Pacey admires "Camp" the most: the poet at his most quiet and detached.

³⁵I would suggest that this is also true of the work of Patrick Anderson. However, his is a more uneven brilliance, and few of his poems are as flawlessly executed as, say, "Photos of a Saltmine." Nevertheless, there is little to choose between As Ten as Twenty and The White Centre.

Chapter V

¹Pacey, Creative Writing in Canada, 156; and Wynne Francis, "Montreal Poets of the Forties", passim.

²Reprinted in Dudek and Gnarowski, eds., The Making of Modern Poetry in Canada.

³John Sutherland, "Editorial", First Statement, I (Sept. 1942).

⁴John Sutherland, "Editorial", First Statement, II (Feb.-March 1945).

⁵Dorothy Livesay, "The Outrider", First Statement, II (Oct. 1943). Collected in Dorothy Livesay's The Documentaries.

⁶"Editorial", First Statement, II (March 1944).

⁷Anderson, Snake Wine and Search Me. Over the Alps was published in England in June 1969, and was not available for this study.

⁸For example, G. Ashe, "A Scientific Attitude in Poetry", First Statement, III (October 1943); Irving Layton, "Let's Win the Peace", First Statement, II (May 1944); J. B. Squire, "Enigma", First Statement, III (June-July 1945).

⁹In the questionnaire (Anderson), and the Dorothy Livesay interview (P. K. Page).

¹⁰Questionnaire, July 1969.

¹¹John Sutherland, review of Poems by Robert Finch, Northern Review, I (April-May 1947).

¹²Anderson, "Bombing Berlin", Preview 18.

¹³G. Horowitz, "Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism. . .", 70.

¹⁴Ibid., 71.

¹⁵Martin Ellis, "The Teheran Line", First Statement, II (October-November 1944).

¹⁶Scott, Selected Poems, 60.

¹⁷Scott, "Orderly Decontrol", Selected Poems, 62.

¹⁸Anderson, "A Nest of Luck", Northern Review, I, 4 (Dec. 1946-Jan. 1947).

¹⁹Anderson, "The Statues", Preview 22; "Montreal", Preview 4. Shaw, "Platitudes of Necessity", Preview 8.

Chapter VI

¹Spears, ed., Auden: A Collection of Critical Essays, 82.

²Ewart, "Audenesque for an Initiation", Poetry of the Thirties, ed. Skelton, 67.

³Reprinted in "Alan Crawley and Contemporary Verse", Canadian Literature, XLI (Summer 1969), 87-96. Dorothy Livesay is in error, however: the documentary poem "The Outrider" was published in First Statement in 1943.

APPENDIX

This appendix makes available thirteen poems from Preview which are discussed in the text of this thesis, but which were never published in book form. Almost all the Preview verse of F.R. Scott and P.K. Page has been collected in their books: there are nine Preview poems in Cry Ararat! (1967), and all but two of Scott's Preview poems are in his 1966 Selected Poems. Thus the majority of the following pieces are by Bruce Ruddick and Neufville Shaw, with the addition of three uncollected Anderson poems.

By Neufville Shaw:

POEM

Great interlacing waters
Greenspotted with islands which surrender never,
As memories through a dead oblivion,
The world caught by the sun
Spins its rigid dance
Pushing us through ineluctable rhythms
Just sifting the varied sea silt
We catch the under bones of
Things.
Hidden behind leafy arabesques
Patterned in chequer gold and shadow
We live on islands built
In waters which interlace.
Yet ships bear different flags,
Hose the sky with different smokes,
And wink distantly to their neighbours.
(Preview 1)

NOVELLA

One last tired regret
For those who under the clawing olive tree
Have known the magnificence of men
Who held a destiny as a hero might --
In lands

Where coloured saints of wood
 Hold forth a rotting hand,
 And where the metal men of past
 Lean on gentle antique spears
 To see the candle's metal blade
 Cut down a nervous swinging night.

One last tired regret
 And
 Then our heavy debt
 Be paid of certain hate
 Tall muscled of our love
 For those who watched the shouting moors advance
 (Their knives dance in the Spanish light,
 Their sacred hearts upon their sleeves)
 And the withered lands which held their fate;
 Who stood against
 The general who would sew the sun upon his coat,
 The men who tell their lands as on a chain,
 The tinkling sanctus bell upon the solid paunch
 That led them to the final wall.

These bitter things that bear tomorrows
 In wanton flow by those who wait
 And watch their distant passage as in a wind
 Which fondles by a weightless load
 Till all is counted and the time is come.
 (Preview 6)

OBITUARY WITHOUT END

As to how many are dead,
 The question has its difficulties,
 Because
 The telegraph poles that bear finalities,
 The newspapers that yell obsequies,
 And the wireless that answers questions,
 Were all blown up yesterday.
 Flat they are now
 And the dead are stacked up like
 Railway tracks.

It's difficult.
 You see
 They assume the character of mud,
 Ooze into fingering roots,
 And, quietly, in a million minute ways,
 Change to grass, to elms, to oaks;
 And then to mice or stoats or grass again.

Systems, they say, are so important.
 Like the way the Evening Post Poet
 Says

That Joe Smith, the Average American,
 Who served canned soup at the A & P,
 Or Labelle, the corny little Quebecois,
 Who gurgled like a year old kid
 The day the corvette sank
 Took time off and died
 To protect our way of life,
 Our right to criticise the other guy
 Even though he, owing a chain of papers,
 Can whisper so that it sounds a roar.

O.K., they died. They became turnips
 Or, perhaps, even a quinine tree.
 And we who count the dead,
 Who measure them on each other's faces,
 Are so certain of our uncertainties,
 So sure that any old system is O.K.,
 It makes one want to weep.

(Preview 6)

PLATITUDES OF NECESSITY

I am encompassed within myself,
 leaning through the socket of my eye
 and feeling lands unfold like fans.
 Arrow-shod I have fled before the Gods
 who, tall with rage, have reached
 down clinging corridors
 and sought to do me harm.

O heart, bear courage
 to deny the shrines an easy knowledge makes
 which, loud with flowers, hold high the sun-caught
 rigid dogmas of our day:
 for who will say I don't know
 and, willing, face the ignorance of a septic night.

bound in armour, the knights ride
 freedom bloody on their flags
 and words that gleam on for-aimed swords.
 For it is easier so to die.
 Slogan-wise, drums shake the skin of air
 And, with their ball of sound, lay low our desolate monument.
 For of necessity is simplicity bred.
 And, peopled with our blood, their strong abstraction
 becomes our new reality.

(Preview 8)

AUGUST 1942

Here, at evening, away from war and city
 Grass shrills with myriad thin-winged things.
 Petal and leaf, dead and budding equate intricately
 And evergreens, birds' homes, like beard stubble the hills.
 Worm-fed, grub-fed bird on grey post flits and becomes flocks.
 Rabbits in gardens, skunks on dung heaps feed.
 In lake roe and egg, tadpole and fry mark race histories.
 Named, unknown stars link up, lock up me with these.

Oh, lay about with axe, clear, build rooves --
 Shingle stems back storm, brick shuts out plant and bug.
 Regenerate ova with occasional sperm and man haunts streets.
 Till competing cells proliferate and inundate man's lanes and bones.

But today in field, in gully my many brothers die unseasonably.
 The perennial world reels, fevered with pregnancies.
 Surely my only annual brothers serve more than hoe and spanner,
 Save more than tunneled, chambered, hard-backed vaults.

(Preview 6)

25

In the lab, flat on his back
 bedsores open, eyes closed
 Joseph A played Death admirably.
 At first we were awed
 our sense unaccustomed.
 Later we stood with heart
 and brain raw in hand
 following channel and tract,
 studying pulley and hinge,
 lung and gut that fanned and fed.
 And cities of cells,
 the thoroughfares of blood,
 the luxurious lolling in eye,
 the rich in tongue and car
 and the dark tough slum of the rectum.

He, labourer, muscle machine	
required daily 4000 calories: -	
to contract the heart and to	
expand the lungs etc. --	42%
Specific Dynamic Action --	4%
loads lifted, running to and fro --	43%
leisure activities (pursuit of	
happiness, defense of freedom etc.	6%
miscellany, Acts of God etc. ---	5%

Age crept like a vine within the skull.
 Repetition of days, like centrifuge
 whirled the frayed mind among

its comic-strip constellations.
 (He dreamed a Face in The Sky.
 Heard the unctucus assurance.)
 Then the lode in his brain sank
 in his salt red flood.

While the Old Boy sat there
 he played his part, told his tale.
 Milquetoast become Daniel.

(Preview 7)

REHABILITATION

Some afternoon, dreaming of love,
 a pale stenographer will push
 the final button and the machine
 will run off the great totals
 in neat rows of dumb numbers --
 for the books.

Historians will reduce it to maps
 and fine ordered words to show
 how the dead got that way.
 And later, it will become a date
 with a lot of other dates, memorized
 by kids in grade eight.

The little guy in the street
 will ask the same answerless questions
 and surmise with bookie and grocer
 and curse the same goddam things
 and buy the inevitable gold brick
 from this year's slick son of a bitch.

The hidden profits will stand
 majestically on mountainside,
 doves strutting in the eaves
 while the club-men, below, on the lawn,
 sit in the summer sun drinking
 the "people's blend".

The journals will note the death
 of the last of the old Commandoes.
 Some Hallowe'en the medals
 will get lost by bell-ringing grandson,
 and the memorials be moved uptown
 to make way for the era's new
 colossal "Speedway".

And hidden in library files,
 in the fading rotogravures --
 a boy sits in rubble playing
 with lathing and bricks --
 a fat man in tears watches
 a meagre ceremonial --
 a peasant woman slumps to her knees
 hopeless hands upturned
 on the beaten wheat.

(Preview 10)

THE CONQUEROR

Leaving the details to the Big Boys,
 still at a smart one twenty to the minute
 he turned the corner and discovering the number
 plumbed the subterranean entrance to his castle.
 The woman he embraced at the door
 compared favourably with a three-year memory
 and last month's jaunty little English broad.
 He patted the backside of a two-year old
 alien and colicky in his arms.
 Startled by the older boy's carious grin
 was immediately sorry for them and for himself,
 looked at the unknown walls and for a moment
 sensed a wild enemy no bayonet stills.
 Took up with words while he sat and plucked
 the city's scraps of welcome off his coat.
 Folded his uniform and resumed his life.
 Through the window the street-light stormed
 while he lay wakened by a stranger's cry.
 Heard rats scamper in corner and
 hurled the door-knob memento from Berlin.
 Then, dreamed of morning when stalwart
 he stalked, burdened with badge, beloved.
 Later, hounds the streets, his old inherited stand,
 loved by the world like a whore with varicose legs.

(Preview 12)

By Patrick Anderson

MONTREAL

Under my head domed like a theatre
 I walked by houses spilling their look and their dark
 between great trees on the boulevards of summer,
 and on my stage the frightened boy uttered his tedious soliloquy
 while my other hero sang of joy like a tenor:
 then from the bogus facade of my middle class face
 my tal^entscout glance was impresario

of children playing in alleys I could not follow
 for puberty sprouted between: of men and women
 seen in my magic mirror and the glass of class.
 I belonged to the theatre, I knew, and also this:
 that love and fear were equally booked at my house.

Thus I passed lovers in the boom of love
 who drew two curtains across the window of sorrow:
 one told me much was changed and many were gone
 and life was raw and rude to pouring boys -
 another said, Look! I looked, and saw the city
 guarded by planes which in true flight's perversion
 curse from the praying blue, their height a dart.
 I saw the mothers' sons in a rage of Asia
 move the jungle salient without the tourist's usual smile
 to crouch by a palm in a dream of technicolour
 with the newsreel and the movie at last made one.
 Then I came to the abstract place: a red brick wall
 guillotined with shadow a square of added dust -
 o the human clasp had shrunk from its finger-nails,
 the head was drowned below antennae-aerials!
 Suddenly a radio blared like a paper flower
 in a bowl of brass. Against one wall I saw,
 almost invisible, the sandy soldier
 through whose wounded face a stone face was trying to form.

I climbed the mountain into that Sunday air
 to which rising slowly from aquarium slum
 on Sundays only the double people come -
 I saw the terraces of class run down to our nationhood
 by river and railway: the broad street of the Jews
 lay open between the twisted fascist alleys
 and the holy rolling negroes rolled in unholy smoke
 beyond the tracks: I saw quarter and counter quarter
 in block and check - o French and English,
 Jew and not Jew, artist and public,
 child, parent, rich, poor, where the bully of stone
 whacked in the cringing wood. Yes there I stood
 where sunlight taught in the tree, hearing the immense cultural
 silence
 float up through the birds singing like English Verse:
 and tasting a bird's voice in its wooden spoon
 I heard the silence about pain, the ambiguous human silence.
 while Jerusalem rang in the green - silence so great
 one could hear the nightengale and then Keats' cough in answer.

Then though I of a different silence, wired for sound,
 for artists' variations on the workers' steady chorus,
 when the heart adjusts the lovers show listening love,
 and the trumpets are long ears in the people's armies.

(Preview 4)

MINERS

Here it is always night
 under Glamorgan:
 under the heels of girls
 hanging their washing
 in a Welsh wind,
 under the heather hoarding
 the mountain bees
 whose blaze pales
 in the shadow of mountains;
 dark in the big seams,
 dark at the coal face
 and in the shaft, the workings (whether the pit
 be under land or sea)
 it is always dark.

But the men come with lights
 and bury themselves in the mine
 where the great forests of fern
 and flowers and fabulous trees
 that once grew on the earth
 now lie all hard and dark
 and packed together -
 that we may have ferns of flame
 and flowers of fire
 and great vines of power over our cities
 the great birds and mailed saurian
 machinery
 the men go down
 to that dark harvest.

As though the lightening returned to the thundercloud
 the men return
 to the great primitive thundercloud of the earth:
 as though the child returned into the womb
 the men return.
 Many die. It is dangerous.
 Gas explodes. Water pours in.
 Dark becomes dark again.

The dead in the coal
 slowly precipitate.
 Many died after waiting
 on ledges or in the black water
 until their hunger relaxed
 into a satisfied decrepitude
 and their eyes reflected no more
 the imagined light.
 Many died after long waiting
 for a hammer in white
 to tap like a saviour
 and lights rinse with haloes
 heads fear made holy.

But the dark was sufficient
 unto itself. The hours
 were absorbed like chemicals
 and time slowed down into geology.

Many times the syren
 gushed in the hearts of women
 or the wheeling steeple
 stopped, and the strike was on:
 then by the little cottages,
 each with its privy under the black and blue hill,
 men hard with anger
 stood like sketches drawn by a nervous hand
 upon the margin of life.

Their dangerous trade
 had made them radical and black
 yet what more dangerous
 than to sell furs or flowers
 to women whose good time was nearly up,
 whose discontent, drawing the mouth's bow queerly,
 impaled a Jew upon a continent?
 And what more truly dark
 than the dim workings
 and mining miles of slums
 where labour picked itself to be
 another's profit? What
 more certain than that props would give
 and death, leaking in roof,
 cover them up with darkness, a final shame?

Yet now the derricks race
 upon Glamorgan's hills
 and the wheels of our heads
 draw up the loaded veins
 of once blind power
 and dredge for the long dark
 and waiting monuments
 of the people's dead:
 firing those histories, we forge
 from shadows weapons.

(Preview 15)

WE THE PEOPLE

We the people
 living on every mainstreet in the world,
 loving the moonstone and the violet,
 answering to Joe and Chung and calling
 to Joan Ramona Sasha y Alvarez
 of Martinique and other suburbs west -
 her platinum hair, her young mouth red with betel,

and her eyes floating
 London, Shanghai, including the island.

We the people
 praying by the Ganges, fixing a car
 on Sunday, flicking a lever, fishing
 in the North Sea or the Back River,
 and screwing something on to something else on the assembly
 line,
 or turning the praying pillars
 of Tibet on the brown plateau:
 this labour of ours covers the whole world,
 which turns also
 amongst comets and shooting stars, in its orbit.

We the people
 being everywhere except we do not organise
 (although that is beginning, that is beginning now),
 being wonderful but rarely quite ourselves
 and capable but do not try too much,
 have had as property no more than this
 a lonely exit,
 a private death in every public ward
 fashioned by fear, by pain made sumptuous.

But just suppose
 a lucid science mated with delight,
 a hope was farmed, a joy collectivised,
 and teachers brought the flowers to the people,
 soldiers the people to the flowers. Would
 not everyone like lovers wear the world
 and time grown round
 be grasped, and globes display the short way home?

(Preview 15)

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